

## C H A P T E R   I V

## MYTHOLOGY

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INTRODUCTORY:

"Mythology means the body of myths or stories which give an account of the gods and heroes, describing their origin and surroundings, their deeds and activities, and it is thus included in, though not co-extensive with, that aspect of religion which is concerned with belief."<sup>1</sup>

All that comes under mythology according to this definition is naturally not available in the MKP to

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1 Macdonell A.A., An Article on 'Vedic Religion', ERE, Vol.12, p.601.

its fullest extent.<sup>2</sup> What is mainly found is different accounts of deities like the Devī, the Sun, Dattatreya, and also of some gods already known from Vedic times like Agni, Indra, etc. Besides, in connection with the figure Brahmā particularly the question of the origin of the world etc. have also been dealt with in this Purāṇa which come under the famous Purāṇic topics of Sarga and Pratisarga. This matter can conveniently be considered under the heading cosmogony as part of mythology. The material therefore, that comes under the general topic of mythology divides itself into the following topics:-

Section I - Cosmogony.

Section II - Devī-mythology.

Section III - Solar-mythology.

Section IV - Datta-mythology.

Section V - Gods like Agni, Indra, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Siva.

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2 The stories of ancient Kings (who are naturally heroic figures), that occur in the MKP come under the section Vamśanucarita and require a consideration more as history than as mythology and hence this topic has not been dealt with in this section on mythology.

Section VI - Eschatology,<sup>3</sup> heaven and hell,  
the pitrs or manes, Yama, the  
god of dead, the doctrines of  
transmigration and karmavipāka.

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3 The MKP, as many other Purāṇas, naturally contains matter regarding eschatological topics which generally belong to the section of mythology (cf. how Vedic eschatology is treated by A. A. Macdonell in his Vedic mythology). Hence they are discussed in this chapter.

## SECTION I

COSMOGONY

By Cosmogony (Sarga)<sup>1</sup> is meant the theory of the origin of the universe about which naturally there were lot of speculations even in very early times. In as early a period as that of the RV, "the Vedic thinkers were not unmindful of the philosophical problems of the origin and nature of the world."<sup>2</sup> Cosmogony appears as the first topic in the definition of Purāṇa as Pañca-Lakṣaṇa,<sup>3</sup> and also in almost all the Purāṇas this topic appears to be handled first when the regular purāṇic contents begin.

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1 For comparative and detailed information on 'Cosmogony and Cosmology', vide ERE, Vol.4, pp.125 ff, For a full discussion on 'Purāṇic Cosmogony', vide Pusalkar A.D., Studies in the Epics and Purāṇas, Chapter 5, pp.1-24; and Karmarkar A.P., Bhārata Kaumudī, Part I, pp.323-332.

2 Radhakrishnan, S., Indian Philosophy, Vol.I, p.99.

3 cf. Sargaś ca pratisargaś ca vaṁśo manvantarāṇi ca / Vamśānucaritaṁ ceti purāṇaṁ pañcalakṣaṇam // MKP 134.13. For a full discussion on this problem, Vide Kirfel, Das Purāṇa Pañcalakṣaṇa.

Thus the MKP contains various cosmogonic accounts at the beginning of its regular purāṇic contents (chaps. 42-49), and though generally of mythological contents they can be divided into two types: (I) Philosophical, containing lot of Sāṃkhya-like material mixed with the idea of the Cosmic-egg, and (II) semi-historical, containing genealogical legends in association with the kalpa theory.

(I) The MKP (42.32ff) gives an account of the Sāṃkhyan evolutionary theory which is somewhat different from that of the classical Sāṃkhya. The unmanifested (avyakta) or the subtle, eternal prakṛti, composed of both real and unreal is regarded as Brahman, the chief cause, the imperishable, undecaying, immeasurable, self-dependent etc.<sup>4</sup> The whole world was enveloped by it after the

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4 Pradhānam kāraṇam yat tad avyaktā-khyam maharsayah / yadā-  
 huḥ prakṛtiṃ sukṣmāṃ nityāṃ sadaśātmikāṃ // Dhruvaṃ akṣa-  
 yyam ajaram ameyam nānyasaṃśrayam / gandharūparasair hīnam  
 sabdasparsavivarjitam // Anādyantaṃ jagadyoniṃ (this should  
 be jagadyoni) triḡuṇa prabhavāpyayam / asāmpratam avijñe-  
 yam brahmā gre satnavartata // MKP 42.32.34. The Pradhāna  
 kāraṇa = chief cause, going with 'Brahman' in verse 34.  
 We are not sure whether 'pradhāna' is used here in its  
 technical sense; most probably not. Prof. F.E. Pargiter seems  
 to take it in its technical sense (Vide The Mārkaṇḍeya  
 Purāṇa, E.Tr.p.220). cf. BG 14.3 "mama yonir mahad brahma"/  
 where mama = kṣetrajña and mahad brahma = prakṛti.

dis-solution when the three gunas - (viz. sattva, rajas and tamas) were in equipoise, when it was ruled over by Ksetrajna (Ksetrajñā-dhiṣṭhānāt<sup>5</sup>), the soul. At the time of creation due to the existence of gunas which were in the process of the original principle being put in the process of creation,<sup>6</sup> there evolved the pradhāna from it (i.e. Brahman). From the pradhāna the mahat emerged and it was then covered by the avyakta (or pradhāna),<sup>7</sup> and being so covered it differentiated itself as the sāttvika, rājasa and tāmasa mahat.<sup>8</sup> The pradhāna covered the mahat

- 5 The word 'Ksetrajñā' in 'Ksetrajñā-dhiṣṭhānāt' means Brahman.
- 6 Gunabhāvāt srjyamānāt sargakāle tatah punah / MKP 42.36<sup>ab</sup>. The word in the original is 'srjyamāna', and according to the textual wording it has to be connected with the word 'pradhānam' in verse 32 and 'Brahman' in verse 34. It is clear that Brahman was not being created; on the contrary it was the world that was being created and obviously 'Brahman' was in the process of helping that creation or more correctly itself being evolved in the world. Hence 'srjyamāna' = 'Being evolved'.
- 7 In addition to the evolutionary theory, the purāṇas teach that each generating principle or element envelopes the one generated by it. cf. Viṣṭ 1.2.37ff., Vide the article on 'Cosmogony' and Cosmology (Indian)' by Jacobi H., ERE, Vol.4, p.159.
- 8 This view of the three different kinds of mahat is peculiar to the purāṇas, which is different from the classical Sāṃkhyas. Cf. Viṣṭ 1.2.34; Vide Dasgupta S.N., A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol.IV, p.35, note 2.

just as a seed is covered by the skin. Being so covered there sprang from the three-fold mahat, the three-fold ahamkara called *vaikārika*, *rajasa* and *bhūtādi* or *tāmasa* ahamkara.

Regarding the further process of creation viz. the rise of the *tanmātras* and the *bhūtas*, two views are stated in succession which shows that the MKP must have been revised; and the second view, which is not compatible with the first, was incorporated at a later stage.<sup>9</sup> These two views are as follows:-

(a) From the *bhūtādi* or *tāmasa* ahamkara which is covered by the mahat, just as the mahat itself was covered by the *pradhāna*, there sprang through its spontaneous self-modification the *śabda-tanmātra*, from which by the same process there sprang the *ākāśa*, possessing the quality of sound. Again, the *bhūtādi* ahamkara covered up the *ākāśa*, which produced spontaneously by self-modification

<sup>9</sup> cf. KP 4. 22ff. <sup>such</sup> The remarks of S.N. Dasgupta on the KP 4. 22ff are applicable to the case of the MKP and hence they are applied in our estimate of the MKP also. (A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol.III, p.510).

the sparsa-tanmātra, and it produced the Vāyu possessing touch as its quality. Vāyu, in the state of development, produced the rūpa-mātra which produced jyotiṣ (light-heat) possessing the quality of colour. The Vāyu, which is characterised by touch, enveloped the rūpa-mātra. The jyotiṣ, in the condition of development, produced rasa-mātra which produced the water which is characterised by the quality of taste. Water, characterised by taste, covered the rūpa-tanmātra i.e. were covered by it. From water, in the state of development, evolved gandha-tanmātra which produced the earth which has the quality of smell. The tanmātras are the potential conditions of qualities and hence the qualities are not manifested there. They are, therefore, traditionally called aviseṣa. They do not manifest the three-fold qualities of the guṇas as sānta, ghora and mūḍha. It is for this reason also that they are called aviseṣa.

From the Vaikārika or Sāttvika ahaṁkāra evolved the Vaikārika sarga.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> This term is not defined here. Later on (42.49<sup>cd</sup>, 50<sup>ab</sup>), however, the manas and the ruling deities of the organs are called Vaikārika.



(From the Taijasa ahamkāra evolved the five cognitive senses viz. the ear, the skin, the eyes, the tongue, and the nose, and the five conative or active ones viz. the generative organ, anus, the hands, the feet and the speech and hence) the five cognitive and conative senses are called the Taijasa organs. The ruling deities thereof are called Vaikārika which term also includes the manas which is the eleventh organ. The functions of the cognitive organs are sound, touch, form, taste and smell, whereas those of the conative ones are sensual pleasure, excretion, eating, movement and speech.

(b) Ākāśa as the sound-potential covered up the touch-potential and from this sprang up Vāyu, which has therefore two qualities - the sound and touch. Both the qualities, śabda and sparsa, entered the colour - potential, whence sprang up agni (fire), with three qualities - the śabda, the sparsa and the rūpa. These qualities, viz. śabda, sparsa and rūpa, entered the taste-potential, whence came into existence water having four qualities - śabda, sparsa, rūpa and rasa. These four qualities entered smell-

potential, from which sprang into existence gross bhūmi (the earth), which has all the five qualities of śabda, sparsa, rūpa, rasa, and gandha. The five gross elements are regarded as fully specialised modifications (viśeṣa) and hence are distinguished as śānta, ghora and mūḍha. They contain one another through their mutual inter-penetration, within the earth is contained all this visible and invisible world firmly enclosed. And those distinguishing marks are perceptible by organs of sense, and are recollected by reason of their permanency. They take each successive one the property of its preceding one.

Mahat, ahaṁkāra and the five tanmatras were in themselves unable to produce the world. Consequently the principles beginning from mahat, working in mutual co-operation, created, through the superintendence of the puruṣa {puruṣa-dhiṣṭhitatvāc ca} and by the help of avyakta (avyakta-nugraheṇa), the (Cosmic) egg which gradually expanded from within like a water-bubble. This egg lying on the water was bigger than the bhūtas. From this Cosmic

egg the Kṣetrajña called Brahman - also called Hiranyagarbha (the four-faced God) - is produced;<sup>11</sup> he is the first corporeal being (sarīrin) and is also called the puruṣa; he existed at first, the original creator of living beings. The further description shows that this is the Brahmanḍa or the Cosmic egg which occupied all the three worlds, moveable and immoveable. Meru was born from it, and then the mountains were its embryo-skin; the oceans were its embryo-fluid; and it (i.e. the Brahmanḍa, one may say) contained<sup>12</sup> all this world with the gods, demons, mankind, the continents and the other lands, the mountains, oceans and the throng of luminous worlds. The Cosmic egg was encircled on the outer side by water, fire, ākāśa, bhūtādī, mahat and avyakta, each of which is ten times as large as the earth. There are thus seven coverings. The eight prakṛtis are also spoken of, and probably the Cosmic egg is the eighth

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11 It is a little bit surprising that the Kṣetrajña is said to increase though the Ātman is immutable. This appears to be some special doctrine which later on disappeared.

12 The word 'Brahmanḍa' is not used in the account. Here it is used in a sort of summarizing stanza (43.1), which may be late, i.e. of the time when the word Brahmanḍa had become current. Incidentally it shows that the original account is comparatively old.

cover.<sup>13</sup> The prakṛti is eternal and within it resides the puruṣa who is called Brahman. Just as one sunk in water, on emerging from it, throws the water-bubbles away, so Brahman, the all-pervading, throws the prakṛti<sup>14</sup> (on emerging from the egg).<sup>15</sup> The Avyakta (prakṛti) is called Ksetra, and hence the Brahman is called Ksetrajña.

Such was the creation due to prakṛti which is governed by Ksetrajña, the soul. The first creation was not preceded by any intelligence (i.e. it was unintentional) like the lightening (in the sky).

The prakṛta-pratisaṅcara occurs when the universe merges in prakṛti. In this state the avyakta exists within itself as it were, and both the prakṛti and the puruṣa subsist with the sameness of character (sādharmya); tamas

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13 MKP 42-70ab. The passage is obscure as it is difficult to find out exactly what these eight prakṛtis are.

14 Here the prakṛti means the vikāras or modifications of prakṛti. Here there is some touch of the vedānta doctrine.

15 Yathā magno jale kascid umajjan jalasambhavam // Valayaṃ ksipati brahmā sa tathā prakṛtiḥ vibhuḥ / MKP 42.71cd-72ab. Prof. F.E.Pargiter misunderstands the verse and translates it as "just as one sunk in water, on emerging from it, seems to be born from water (instead of jala-sambhavam' he suggests the reading 'jala-sambhavaḥ', and flings the water away, so Brahman is both prakṛti and the soul (Vibhuḥ)", vide The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, E.Tr.p.223, note and on the same page.

and sattva subsist in equipoise and permeated by each other, and rajas remains as the dynamic principle inherent in sattva and tamas, just as oil remains in sesamum. At the dawn of the day, Brahman awakes and just as love or breeze of spring entering into young women tends to produce agitation, even so the Brahman, the embodiment of supernatural power (yogamūrtimat) enters into prakṛti and puruṣa by its intense supernatural power (yogena pareṇa). When the pradhāna is disturbed the God Brahman is born within the cavity of the egg (as already stated above). He himself is regarded as both dynamic (kṣobhaka) and passive (kṣobhya), the lord of prakṛti, and through contradiction and dilation, he exists even in the state of the pradhāna.<sup>16</sup>

Being created, the lord Svayambhu eventhough himself <sup>creates the universe</sup> nirguna, as Brahma, invested with the rajas guna, ~~creates~~ <sup>the universe,</sup> preserves it, as Viṣṇu, invested with the sattva guna, and finally destroys it as Rudra, invested with the tamas guna (43.3 ff).

The MKP also deals here with the duration of the

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<sup>16</sup> Sa eva kṣobhakah pūrvam sa kṣobhyah prakṛteḥ patih /  
sa saṅkocavikāśa (it should be sa) bhyam pradhanatale' pā  
saṁsthitaḥ // MKP 43.12.

life of Brah̄mā, Viśnu and Śiva (43.8), and explains how human and divine years are reckoned, the duration of the four ages, the kṛta, the Tretā, the Dvāpara and the Kali, and of a manvantara, and the length of Brah̄mā's day and life (43.22ff).

Then it describes the raising of the earth from beneath the waters by Nārāyaṇa in the form of a boar, and the creation of earth, sky, heaven and maharloka (44.3ff).

In the MKP 44.14ff, we find another account of creation. It is said that to Brahman in the beginning of the kalpas, whilst he was meditating on creation, there appeared an unintelligent creation in the form of tāmasa, moha, mahā-moha, tāmisra and andha-tāmisra. These were the five kinds of avidyā which sprang from the Lord. (From these there came a creation of the <sup>e at</sup>vegetation) which have no inner or outer consciousness and may be described as having as it were, closed souls and consisting of vegetation. Since vegetation is declared to be 'primary', this is the Mukhya creation. Not being satisfied with this he created the animals and birds, etc., called tiryak-srotas. The animals,

etc. are called tiryac, because their circulation is not upwards but runs circularly in all directions. They are full of tamas, and are described as avedinah. They stray in wrong courses (utpathagrāhinah), and are satisfied with their ignorance as true knowledge, i.e. they do not seem the acquirement of certain knowledge. They are self-swayed, and devoted to self; they comprise twenty-eight classes.<sup>17</sup> They are aware internally of pleasure and pain but they can not communicate with one another (antah prakāśās te sarve

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17 Ahankṛtā ahaṃ-mānā aṣṭāvīṃśat dvidhātmakāḥ // MKP 44.20cd. The twenty-eight classes of animals are not enumerated in the MKP.

āvrtas tu parasparam). Then, being dissatisfied with the  
 animal creation, <sup>Brahmā</sup> ~~He~~ created "the gods" who are always  
 happy and can know both their inner feelings and ideas, and  
 also the external objects, and communicate with one another.  
 Being dissatisfied with that creation also He created "men",  
 which creation is called arvak-srotas as distinguished from  
 the creation of gods which is called urddhva-srotas. These  
 men have an abundance of tamas and rajas, and they have  
 therefore a preponderance of suffering and are continuously  
 engaged in action; they are aware internally and externally  
 of pleasure and pain. They are mankind and are capable  
 of causation. Anugraha is the fifth creation; it is  
 disposed in four ways, by contrariety, by perfection, by  
 tranquillity and by satisfaction. The objects of this  
 creation have knowledge of the past and of the present. The  
 creation of the origins of the gross elements and the gross  
 elements is called the sixth. They all possess comprehen-  
 siveness, and are prone to mutual division, and the origins  
 of the gross elements are both impulsive and devoid of  
 propensities.



There are thus nine creations. The first three, called the unintelligent creation (abuddhipūrvaka), is the naturalistic creation of (i) mahat, (ii) the tanmātras, and (iii) the bhūtas, the physiological senses. The fourth creation, called also the primary creation (mukhya-sarga), is the creation of plants; fifth is the creation of the triyag-srotas; sixth the urdha-srotas; seventh the arvāk-srotas or men. The eighth is the anugraha-sarga which "seems to be the creation of a new kind. It probably means the distinctive characteristic of destiny of each of the four creations, plants, animals, gods and men. The plants have, for their destiny, ignorance; the animals have mere bodily energy; the gods have pure contentment; and the men have the realization of ends."<sup>18</sup> Then comes the ninth sarga, called the kaumāra-sarga, which probably refers to the creation of the mental sons of God such as Santkumāra, etc. The first three sargas, as already stated above, were called prākṛta, the next five creations were known as

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<sup>18</sup> Dasgupta S. N., Op.Cit., Vol.III, p.502, Vide also fn.1 on the same page.

Vaīkrta and the last one, the ninth, was prākṛta-vaīkrta.

Thus on the whole, the above account is a mixture of philosophical and mythological ideas. In general, it may be stated that the scheme of the primary creation is from the Sāṃkhya; but the other systems such as the theory of illusion of the Vedānta, the doctrine of pantheism etc. are also found side by side. Brahman is regarded as both puruṣa and prakṛti, which is governed by it. Thus the MKP differs from the classical Sāṃkhya in that therein the Sāṃkhya is theistic, and it does not hold a duality of the first principles. Here the classical Sāṃkhya are united in Brahman and are not evolutions therefrom but so many aspects of Brahman.

(II) In the MKP 44.2ff it is stated that Brahman assumed four different forms in succession and from them were produced the demons, the gods, the fore-fathers and mankind. And afterwards assuming another form he produced all other living beings, creatures, vegetation etc. from his limbs. But these beings did not multiply and he created the first Manu Svāyambhuva and a woman Śatarūpā. These

two had two sons Priyavrata and Uttānapāda and also two daughters Ākūti and Prasūti. Prajāpati R̥ci married Ākūti and begot on her Yajña and Dakṣinā. Yajña begot on Dakṣinā twelve sons known as "Yamas", the gods in the Svāyambhuva manvantara.

Dakṣa married Prasūti and had twenty-four daughters,<sup>19</sup> of whom thirteen were married to Dharma and bore love and other personified feelings; ten were married to the mind-born sons of Brahmā and Agni and the pitrs, and one named Satī became Śiva's consort.

Adharma (Brahmā's son) and his progeny is then mentioned. Adharma begot on his wife Himsā a son called Anṛta and a daughter named Nirṛti. Anṛta begot on Nirṛti two sons, Naraka and Bhaya, and two daughters, Māyā and Vedanā. Bhaya begot on Māyā Mrtyu, and Naraka (Raurava) begot on Vedanā Duhkha. Mrtyu had two wives Nirṛti and Alakṣmī. Mrtyu begot on Nirṛti Vyādhi, Jarā, Soka, Tr̥ṣṇa and Krodha. These have neither wives

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19 Vide Chart No. 1 on pp. 406-408

nor sons and they all live in perpetual chastity. Mrtyu begot on Alaksmī fourteen sons,<sup>20</sup> who carry out his commands, and visit men at the time of their destruction. They inhabit the ten organs and the mind and influence man or woman towards the sense-objects, and assailing the organs they also influence men by means of passion, anger and other feelings, so that men suffer injury through adharma and other evil ways; the other two sons take possession of self-consciousness and the intellect respectively, they strive to destroy men and women. The fourteenth son named Duhsaha resides in men's houses and is very awful in appearance (45.29ff). In connection with this evil spirit and his offsprings the MKP supplies various popular superstitions etc. which are dealt with under the discussion on superstitions, Beliefs and Taboos (chap. II, Sec.V).

Elsewhere in the MKP (101.3ff) we come across the story that Daksa's<sup>21</sup> thirteen daughters were married

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20 Vide Chart No. 2 on p. 409

21 This Dakṣa is Dakṣa Prācetas who is Dakṣa Prajāpati reborn in Uttanapāda's lineage - cf. ViSP I.5.

to Brahmā's grandson and Marīci's son Ka(ā)śyapa, who by his wives begot the gods, animals, birds etc.

The foregoing accounts closely follow those in the Viṣṇu and other Purāṇas.<sup>22</sup> They give us some idea of the heterogeneous character of its cosmogonic theory. Mythological and theosophical notions of the Vedic period have been combined with later notions such as the Sāṃkhyan evolutionary theory, the genealogical legends and the kalpa theory, in order to give a rational theory of the origin of the world in harmony with the teachings of the Vedas. In effect, however, the scheme leaves the impression of disparate parts, ill-combined or only formally united.

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22 Viṣṇu 1.2; 1.4.2-10; 45ff; 1.5; 1.7.1.35; 1.8.1-15; 1-10.

The remarks of H. Jacobi (Op.Cit., ERE., Vol.4, p. 159) on the Viṣṇu are also applicable to the case of the MKP. Some of them are applied in our estimate of the MKP also.





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Agnisvattas Bahiṣṣadas Anagnis Sagnis



CHART NO. 2

Brahma (47.29ff)

Adharma = Himsa

Anṛta = Nirrti

Naraka = Vedana  
Duhkha  
Bhaya = Maya  
Mṛtyu = Nirrti and Alakṣmī

Mṛtyu = Nirrti  
Mṛtyu = Alakṣmī

Vyādhi Jarā Soka Tṛṣṇā Krodha  
They had fourteen sons  
viz. Duḥsaha and others.

N.B.:— The sign = stands for the marital relations between the two.

## SECTION II

## DEVĪ MYTHOLOGY

INTRODUCTORY:

The MKP contains a very important section which is styled as the 'Devī-māhātmya' (= DM) (chaps. 78-90) and which later on became famous as 'Sapta-satī'. This section is introduced in the Purāṇa in order to explain as to how the Sāvarṇi Manu acquired lordship over the eighth manvantara by the grace of the goddess Mahāmāyā obtained in his former life as King Suratha by name. This portion is very important for understanding the mythology of the goddess and is in a sense the 'Bible' of Devī-worshippers or Mother-worshippers in India. Moreover, these thirteen chapters are considered to be the sacred scripture of Śāktism, next only to the Vedas. This section is very popular in almost all parts of India even to-day and in the words of A.B.Barth it may be described

as "the principal sacred text of the worshippers of Durgā in Northern India."<sup>1</sup> It, therefore, highly deserves a critical study from the point of view of mythology.

It is proposed to do this task by analysing the contents of the DM in its different aspects and considering their bearings on the problem of the real nature of the Devī and her mythology. This is done under the following headings.:-

- (I) Origins and Exploits of the Devī.
- (II) Her description under the sub-sections, viz.:-
  - (A) Names and Epithets
  - (B) Functions
  - (C) The philosophico-Mythological aspect.
- (III) The Cult.
- (IV) Conclusion.

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<sup>1</sup> Religions of India, p.197, note.

(I) ORIGINS AND EXPLOITS OF THE DEVĪ:

The Devī is said to be Viṣṇu's Yoganidrā or Mahāmāyā, whose origin as such is not stated, the presumption, however, being that she is beginningless. The story about how she made Viṣṇu free from her sway in order to enable him to kill Madhu and Kaitābha does not constitute an origin but is only a statement of her exploit. Further it is this Mahāmāyā whose different incarnations are described in the MKP (for references vide below) after relating how Viṣṇu, being freed from the influence of Yoganidrā, killed Madhu and Kaitābha who tormented Brahmā. There are in all five such accounts. They are briefly given as follows.:-

(1) The first account relates her superhuman form made up out of the combined lustre of the Gods for killing Mahiṣāsurā.

(2) The second account relates to the origin of Kausikī out of Pārvatī's body.

(3) The third account relates the origin of Kālī from Ambikā's fore-head.

(4) The fourth account relates the origin of Candikā-sakti, also called Siva-dūtī, from Devī. Here the account of the Sapta-mātrkās is also met with.

(5) And finally the fifth account relates her future births.

The main details of the story of Yoganidrā and the of various accounts of her different incarnations are as under, :-

**The Story of Yoganidrā:**

Once when Viṣṇu resorted to deep slumber after the dissolution of the world, two demons, Madhu and Kaitabha who were produced out of the dirt of Viṣṇu's ear, tormented Brahmā who was stationed on the navel-lotus of Viṣṇu. Hence Brahmā offered a prayer to the Goddess in order to get Viṣṇu awakened from his Yoganidrā and to disillusion those two demons. Being gratified at his sincere prayer, Yoganidrā cast her bewildering power upon the demons (Madhu and Kaitabha) so as to hasten their death, and roused Viṣṇu

from his slumber by withdrawing her influence which kept him so long in an unconscious state. Viṣṇu, then, killed those demons and saved Brahmā (78.49ff).

Five Accounts of Origin and Exploits of the Devī:

1. Once the gods, being defeated by Mahiṣāsura and other demons, went with Brahmā to Viṣṇu and Śiva seeking their refuge. On hearing of their defeat, violent light came out of the mouths of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva, and also out of the bodies of other gods which when united assumed a female form. The lustre of various gods contributed to form her different limbs, e.g. Śiva's lustre formed her mouth, Yama's lustre her hair, Viṣṇu's lustre her heaps, Brahmā's lustre her feet, Vasu's lustre the fingers of her hands, Soma's lustre her three eyes, the lustre of the two twi-lights her eye-brows and that of the Wind her ears. The gods and others then furnished her with their weapons and possessions, e.g. Śiva gave her a trident, Viṣṇu a discuss, Varuṇa a conch and a noose, Agni a spear, Maruta a bow and a quiver full of arrows, Indra a thunderbolt and a bell from the Airāvata elephant, Yama a rod, Prajāpati a rosary, Brahmā a water-pot, the Sun his rays on all the pores of her

skin, Kāla a sword and a shield, the Milk-ocean a spotless pearl-necklace and a pair of garments, a celestial crest-jewel, ear-rings, bracelets, ardha-candra, armlets over all her arms, anklets, necklace, rings studded with gems for all her fingers, Viśvakarman an axe and an invincible armour, the Ocean the two garlands of unfaded lotuses, the Himavat mountain a lion and gems, Kubera a cup of wine and Śeṣa, the lord of serpents, gave a nāga-hāra adorned with large gems. The goddess, called by various names as Candikā, Ambikā, Bhadrakālī, Durgā, Kālārātri etc., fought with Mahiṣāśura and other demons and killed them with the help of her mount lion and her gaṇas which were produced during the fight out of her breaths (chaps. 79-80).

The VāP gives a similar account regarding the emergence of Kātyāyanī from the accumulated power of the gods (chap.18). The PP offers an allegorical interpretation of the destruction of Mahiṣāśura by remarking that personified ignorance was killed by Jñāna-sakti which is the same as personified wisdom. According to T.A.Gopinath Rao, "it may also be that this story indicates the substitution

of the buffalo-totem worship by a form of goddess-worship among certain early primitive tribes in the country."<sup>2</sup>

2. Once again the gods being oppressed by Sumbha and other demons went to the Himalayas and praised the goddess (Viṣṇu-māyā). Thereupon Pārvatī (Gaurī) came out to bathe in the Ganges. Then Śivā, also called Ambikā, came out of the body of Pārvatī, and said that it was she whom the gods were praising to induce her to kill Sumbha and Nisumbha. She was called Kausikī, because she sprang out from Kosa or frame of Pārvatī's body. When Ambikā came out of her body, Pārvatī's complexion <sup>became</sup> dark, and hence she received the name Kālikā (dark one). Kausikī then lived on the Himalayas and there the two demons, Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa, saw her and informed their King Sumbha about her beauty. Sumbha proposed her to marry him or his brother Nisumbha. But she refused under the pretext of her vow to marry one who conquers her and tones down her pride.<sup>3</sup> Sumbha then

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<sup>2</sup> Elements of Hindu Iconography, Vol.I, Part I, p.354.

<sup>3</sup> Yo māṃ jayati saṃgrāme yo me darpaṃ vyapohati / yo me pratibalo loke sa me bhartā bhaviṣyati // MKP 82.72.



determined to bring her by force and sent Dhūmrālocana with an army. The goddess killed that demon along with his army (chap. 83).

3. Once again Sumbha sent another army of demons now headed by Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa to bring her by force. When they pounced upon her, her forehead became dark with anger and from it came Kālī, also called Bhīmākṣī (84.16), Bhairava-nādinī and Karālavaktrā (84.18), with a frightful face wearing a garland of skulls and tiger-skin and with an infernal weapon (khaṭvāṅga) in her hand.<sup>14</sup> She killed Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa and went back to Ambikā, who thereupon, since she had killed those demons, gave her the name Cāmūṇḍā.<sup>15</sup> (chap. 84).

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14 Tataḥ kopam cakāroccair ambikā tām arin prati /  
kopena cāsyā vadanam maśivarnam abhūt tadā // Bhrukuṭī-  
kuṭilāt tasyā lalāṭaphalakād drutam / kālī karālavadanā  
vinīṣkrāntāsipāsini // Vicitra khaṭvāṅgadharā naramalā  
-vibhūṣaṇā / dvīpicarmaparidhānā suṣkamāmsātibhairavā //  
Ativistāravadanā jihvālalanabhīṣaṇā / nimagnā raktanayanā  
nāḍapūrītā diṅgmukhā // MKP 84.4-7.

15 Yasmāc caṇḍam ca muṇḍam ca grhitvā tvam upāgatā /  
cāmūṇḍeti tato loke khyātā devī bhaviṣyaṣi // MKP 84.26.

4. Next Sumbha sent forth various other armies of demons against the goddess. To help her there came forth the energies of Brahmā, Śiva, Guha (Kumāra), Viṣṇu and Indra being armed with the same weapons, wearing the same ornaments and riding on the same mounts (vāhana) as their corresponding gods (85.12ff). These energies are named as Brahmānī, Mahēśvarī, Kaumārī, Vārāhī, Nārasimhī, and Aindrī<sup>16</sup> (chap.85).

Once Śiva being surrounded by these Devaśaktis, said to Candikā: "soon kill the Asuras for my pleasure". Then from Devī's body came out the Candikā-sakti who was extremely fierce and dreadful in appearance and was attended by the howlings of hundreds of jackals. She is also called Śivadūtī since she sent Śiva as a messenger to Sumbha and Nisumbha.<sup>17</sup> The demons, however, attacked her. Now the war began with Kālī, Śivadūtī, Brahmānī and other Devaśaktis.

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16 For various stories regarding the birth of the Mātrkās in the Purānas and the Āgamas, vide Karmarkar A.P., The Religions of India, Vol.I, pp.109f.

17 Yato niyukto dūtyena tayā devyā śivāḥ svayam / śivadūtīti lokeśmins tataḥ sā khyātim āgatā // MKP 85.27.

These Deva-sakti<sup>8</sup> fought with the demon Raktabīja whose drops of blood falling on the earth produced as many demons as the drops. At last, Candikā killed that demon with the help of Camuṇḍā who drank the demon's blood before it fell on to the ground. Candikā next killed Nisumbha with the help of Kālī, Śiva-dūtī, Brahmanī and others (chap.86).

At this, Sumbha censured the goddess for fighting with the help of various goddesses. Hence she absorbed into herself all her vibhūtis (Brahmanī and others), and fought alone with Sumbha and finally killed him<sup>18</sup> (chap.87).

5. Next being eulogised by the gods for killing Sumbha and Nisumbha, <sup>the</sup> Devī related ~~about~~ her future births (chap.88), as follows:-

(a) She said that in the Vaivasvata manvantara two other demons, Sumbha and Nisumbha would be born and that she would be born of Yasodā in the house of Nanda-gopa and

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18 Ekai vāhaṃ jagatyatra dvitīyākā mamāparā / paśyaitā  
duṣṭa mayyeva viśamtyo mad vibhūtayaḥ // Tataḥ samastā  
tā devyo brahmāṇi pramukhālayam / tasyā devyās tanam  
jagmuḥ rekaikvāśīt tadāmbikā // MKP 87.3-4.

would live on the Viddhya mountain, and kill those demons.

(b) She would eat up the Vaipracitta Dānavas so that her teeth would become as red as pomegranate flowers, and thus she would be known as Rakta-dantikā.

(c) Being eulogised by the sages during a draught lasting for a hundred years she would have an immaculate origin and be known as Śatākṣī and Śākambharī respectively, and would look at the sages with a hundred eyes and maintain until rainfall the whole creation by means of vegetables originating from her own body.<sup>9</sup> During that draught she would kill a powerful demon named Durgamā and would be called Durgādevī.

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9 Tatoham akhilam lokam ātmadehasamudbhavaiḥ /  
bharisyāmi surāḥ śākairāvṛṣṭeh prāṇadhārakaiḥ //  
Śākambharīti vikhyātim tadā yasyāmyahambhuvi / MKP  
88.45-46<sup>ab</sup>.

According to Marshall the Śākambharī aspect of the MKP is traceable to an oblong terracotta sealing found at Harappa showing a nude female figure upside down with legs wind apart, and 'with a plant issuing from her womb. Further, he compares this striking representation of the goddess with an early Gupta terracotta sealing a goddess with her legs in much the same position with a lotus issuing from her neck instead of from her womb.' In the MKP we do not get any information more than her name. (Mohanjo-Daro and Indus Civilisation, Vol.I, pp.48-58).

(d) She would again appear in an awful form (Bhimarūpā) on the Himalayas, exterminate the demons and be famous as Bhimādevī.

(e) She would kill the demon Aruna by taking the form of a bhramara (bee) and would be known as Bhrāmārī.

Finally, she promised the gods that she would assume births and kill the demons whenever they would oppress them.<sup>10</sup> This promise incidentally reminds us of the famous ~~statement~~ of the theory of divine incarnation (Avatāra~~śāstra~~) in the BG.<sup>11</sup>

### (II) DESCRIPTION ETC.:

Mythologically, the Devī is connected with Viṣṇu as his Yoganidrā (vide I - Origins and Exploits of the Devī). Philosophically, she is stated to be the

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10 Itham yadā yadā bādhā dānavo'tthā bhaviṣyati / tadā tadā'vatīryāham kariṣyamyarī saṁkṣayam // MKP 88.51.

11 Yadā Yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati bhārata / abhyu'thānam adharmaṣya tadātmanam karomyaham // BG 4.7.

Prakṛti (78.59) and the Māyā (88.4) of the Sāṃkhya and Vedānta respectively. She is also described in terms which are applicable to higher and lower Brahman e.g. she is described as unborn (Ajā, 89.36), immutable (Akṣarā, 78.54), eternal (Nityā, 78.47; Sanātānī, 78.44 etc.), the upholder (Dhātṛī, 82, 8; Jagaddhātṛī, 78.53 etc.), the creator, preserver, destroyer (78.57 etc.) and resort of the universe (Viśvāśrayā, 88.33), all-creating (Sarvakārini, 82.10), Omniform (Sarvasvarūpā, 88.24), the Highest (Parā, 78.55, 62; Paramā, 81.14), the highest of the highest (Parānām Paramā, 78.62), Omnipotent (Sarvasaktisamanvitā, 88.24), etc. The Ups also declare that the ultimate reality is unborn, eternal, unaging, undying etc.<sup>12</sup> The Devī is described as having her hands, feet, head, mouth, ears and nose everywhere,<sup>13</sup> which shows her omnipresence. The Ups also describe Brahmā in the same words.<sup>14</sup> She is also described as Akhilātmakā (78.63), Jaganmāyī (78.47), Jagamūrti (78.47), Viśvātmikā (88.33).

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12 Cf. ajo nityaḥ śāśvatoyaṃ purāṇo... / na jāyate mriyate vā.... / KU 1.2.18.

13 Sarvataḥ pāṇipādānte sarvatokṣīsiromukhe / Sarvataḥ sa śravaṇāghrāṇe nārāyaṇi namostu te // MKP 88.23. This verse is missing in the Cal.ed.

14 Cf. Apāṇipādo javaṇo grhitā paśyatyacakṣuḥ sa śṛṇotyakarnaḥ // SU 3.19ab.

It may be noted here that the Devī thus represents what Brahman represents in the Ups, the 'Prakṛti' in the Sāṃkhya philosophy and the 'Māyā' in the Vedānta philosophy on a somewhat restricted sense.

Furthermore, her mother or Jaganmātā (80.34) aspect is also touched upon in one of the Devī-Stutis (88.2,4) ~~88.2,4) aspect is more outstanding in the Devī-stutis~~ of in the Mbh the MKP. The epic Durgā-stotras also harp on her mother aspect, and she is described as Skandamātā, Vedamātā, Mother of Siddhasena, Mother of the Mantra-collections, etc., though her Daughter and Sister aspects are more prominently emphasised there.<sup>14a</sup>

The DM also refers in many places to various names and epithets as well as certain functions of the Devī and also present philosophico-mythological aspect of her nature. This will be quite clear from what follows:-

(A) NAMES AND EPITHETS:

Like almost all the important Gods of the Hindu Pantheon, the Devī, too, has various names and epithets describing her nature, form and functions. They occur in various contexts viz. (1) in her Stutis or panygerics, (2) in the narration of her stories, especially for explaining her origin, form or achievements, and (3) also actually

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<sup>14a</sup> For details, vide Banerji J.N., an article on 'Some Aspects & Sakti Worship in Ancient India, Prabuddha Bhārata, Vol.LIX, No.3, pp.229f.

stated by the Goddess herself with reference to her future incarnations. These names and epithets of the Devī are worth noting as they present her original nature.

~~conception~~ Some of her names like Ambikā (79.53 etc.), Durgā (81.18 etc.), Kātyāyanī (85.28 etc.), Kālī (84.5 etc.), Bhadrakālī (80.8 etc.), Bhavānī (32.43) etc. are traceable to the later Vedic texts.<sup>15</sup> The name Durgā has been interpreted to mean that she is the goddess who saves from all sorts of misery and affliction - from all sorts of dangers and difficulties.<sup>16</sup> She has certain universal epithets, viz. Bhagavatī (78.42 etc.), Devī (78.42 etc.), Akhileśvarī (88.37), Isā (88.2), Isvarī (78.60 etc.), Mahesvarī (78.58; 81.33), Paramesvarī (78.62 etc.), Sarvesā (88.24), Sarvesvaresvarī (78.44), Viśvesvarī (88.33) etc. Her epithets like Khaḍginī, Sūlinī, Gadinī, Cakrinī, Saṅkhinī, Cāpinī, Bāṇā, Bhusundī and Parighāyudhā refer to her various weapons with which she destroys evil spirits (vide chaps. 79 etc.), and

<sup>15</sup> Cf. VS 3.57; TBr 1.6.16, 4-5; TAr 10.18; 10.1.7; MU 1.2.4; Grhya-sūtras - Hiranyakeśin and Sāṅkhāyana. For details vide Banerji J.N., an article on "some aspects of Sakti worship in Ancient India, in Prabuddha Bhārata, Vol. LIX, No. 3, pp. 227-232.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Durgāt trayase Durge tat tvam Durgā smrtā janaiḥ // Mbh 4.6.20; cf. Durga-bhava-sāgara-naurasāṅgā, MKP 81.11; Durgārtināsinī, Ibid, 86.29.



protects her devotees (81.24; 88.26,27,28).

The one noticeable thing about the Devī is that she is worshipped in her benign as well as terrific forms.<sup>17</sup> Thus she is both Saumyā (78.62), Ati Saumyā (82.11) or Saumyatarā (78.62) and Raudrā (82.8), Ati Raudrā (82.11). Further, some of her names and epithets like Bhadrā (82.7 etc.), Kalyāṇī (82.9), Sarva-maṅgala-maṅgalyā (88.9) etc. are of gentle mien, while others like Candikā (79.50 etc.), Kālī (84.5 etc.) or Cāmundā (84.26 etc.), Dāruṇā (78.59), Ghorā (78.61), Ghorarūpā (88.19), Mahākālī (89.35), Maharātrī (78.59; 88.21), Kālarātrī (78.59; 80.19), etc. are of an opposite nature.

Some of her epithets are of a Vaiṣṇavite character, viz. Kūrmī (82.9), Lakṣmī (82.10 etc.), Nārāyaṇī (88.7 etc.), Vaiṣṇavi-sakti (88.4), Viṣṇu-māyā (82.6), while certain others are of a Śaivite character, viz. Bābhraṇī (88.22), Gaurī (81.11 etc.), Mahādevī (78.58 etc.), Pārvatī (82.40), Śarvāṇī (82.16),

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17 Saumyāṇi yāni rūpāṇi trailokye vicaranti te / yāni  
cātyanta-ghoraṇi tai rakṣāsmāns tathā bhuvam //  
MKP 81.26.

Śivā (79.17 etc.), Śiva-dūtī (85.27 etc.), Trayambakā (80.18) etc.

Among her philosophic attributes mention may be made of the following ones:- Dhruvā (88.21), Guṇamayā, Guṇāśrayā (88.10), Jagatpratīṣṭhā (82.8), Jananī (78.55), Mahāmāyā (78.2 etc.), Paramā Māyā (88.4), Prakṛti (78.59; 81.7), Sārā (82.10), Tāmasī (78.68; 88.22), Yoganidrā (78.41 etc.). She is also called Mahāmohā (78.58), Mahāvidyā (78.58; 88.21) or Paramā Vidyā (81.9). It is also declared that all Vidyās (Sciences) are her portions, so are all females and so is the whole world. In fact the whole world has been filled (or pervaded) by her.<sup>18</sup> She has certain ritualistic attributes, viz. Svadhā (78.54; 81.8; 88.21), Svāhā (78.54; 81.8), Vasatkārā (78.54). She is also called Svarātmikā, Sudhā, Tridhāmātrātmikā (78.55), Anuccāryā, Śabdātmikā, Trayī (81.10). Moreover, she is also described as the repository of R̥c, Yajus and Saman hymns and as responsible for the existence and production of all the

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18 Vidyāḥ samastās tava devī bhedāḥ, striyaḥ samastāḥ sakalāṃ jagac ca / tvayaikayā pūritamambayaitat kā te stutiḥ stavyaparāparoktiḥ // MKP 88.5. The Cal.ed. reads - "striyaḥ samastāḥ sakalā jagatsu" (91.5<sup>b</sup>) which means "so are all females without exception in the world".

worlds.<sup>19</sup>

She-has-also-certain-mythological-epithets,  
viz--Sandra-rupini--(88.9)--Sarasvati--(88.22)--Savitri--  
(78.55)--etc. She is associated with certain abstract  
qualities and virtues, e.g. Alakṣmī (81.5), Bhūbhṛtām  
Lakṣmī (82.10), Bhūti (88.22), Buddhi (78.60 etc.),  
Cetanā (82.13), Chāyā (82.17), Dhṛti (82.27), Hri (78.60),  
Jāti (82.81), Kānti (82.25), Khyāti (82.10), Kṛti (82.8,11),  
Kṣānti (78.60; 82.20), Kṣudhā (82.16), Lajjā (78.60 etc.),  
Lakṣmī (82.10 etc.), Mahāmedhā (78.58), Mahāmohā (78.58),  
Mahāsmṛti (78.58), Medhā (81.11; 88.22), Nidrā (78.53;  
82.15), Nīti (82.31), Puṣṭi (78.60 etc.), Rddhi (82.9),  
Śānti (78.60; 82.23); Siddhi (82.9), Smṛti (82.29),  
Śraddhā (81.5 etc.), Śrī (78.60), Sukhā (82.9), Trṣṇā  
(82.17), Tuṣṭi (78.60; 82.32). She is the prosperity

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19 Śabdātīkā suvimalargyajuṣām nidhānam udgitharāmya-  
padapāṭhavatām ca sāmnam / dāvi trayī bhagavatī bhava-  
bhāvanāya vārttāsi sarvajagatām paramārtrihantrī //  
MKP 81.10. This half verse admits of more than one  
translation. I have adopted from the commentary  
what seems to be the most natural meaning. The term  
vārttā seems obscure; the commentator explains it  
as vṛttāntarūpā, "having the form of events" as  
Kṛṣi-go-rakṣādi-vṛttir, "following the occupations  
of cultivation, cattle-rearing and such like".

(śrī) in the house of men of good deeds, ruin (alakṣmī) in the house of men of the evil-minded; intelligence (buddhi) in the hearts of the prudent, faith (śraddhā) in good men, modesty (lajjā) in high born men.<sup>20</sup> Elsewhere she is described as lakṣmī bestowing prosperity on the houses of men while she abides with them and also as alakṣmī unto their destruction while she is absent.<sup>20a</sup> She governs the sense-organs of living beings and rules among all living-beings perpetually. She also pervades this entire universe with the form of Thinking Mind (Citirūpena) (82.36-37). She is also identified with Kalā and Kāṣṭhā which constitute the measures of time (88.8). In the Epic also the goddess is identified with many such abstractions.<sup>20b</sup>

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20 Yā śrī svayaṃ sukṛtināṃ bhavaneṣvalakṣmī, pāpātmanāṃ kṛtadhiyāṃ hrdayeṣu buddhiḥ / śraddhā satāṃ kulajāna-prabhavasya lajjā tām tvā natāḥ sma paripālāya devī viśvam // MKP 81.5.

20a Bhavakāle nṛṇāṃ saiva lakṣmīḥ vṛddhipradā grhe / saivābhāve tathālakṣmīḥ vināśayopajāyate // Ibid, 89.37.

20b Vide Karmarkar A.P., The Religions of India, Vol.I, p.101.

(B) FUNCTIONS:

The main theme of the DM is to depict the heroic stories of how the Devī destroyed all the evil spirits in the world. Whenever it was troubled by oppressive and cruel demons, the gods approached her and the Devī, assuming various forms, destroyed the demons. There are many such stories and they are briefly grouped under the following three heads.:-

<u>Request made by the God or Gods.</u>	<u>Devī's forms</u>	<u>Destruction of the demon or demons.</u>	<u>Chaps.</u>
I    Brahmā	Viṣṇu's Yoga- nidrā or Mahā- māyā who arous- ed Viṣṇu from his deep slumber.	Madhu and Kai- tabha killed by Viṣṇu when bewitched by Yoganidrā.	78.49ff
II    Indra and others	Ambikā or Simha-vāhinī	Mahiṣāsura and his army.	79-80
III    "	Kausikī	Dhūmrālocana and his army.	82-83
	Kālī or Cāmunḍā	Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa and their army.	84
	Caṇḍikā-Sakti or Śiva-dūtī as well as	Rakta-bīja and his army.	85
	Sapta-Mātrkās and Kālī	Nisumbha and his army.	86
		Sumbha and his army	87

This shows very clearly that the main function of the Devī has been the destruction of evil and the establishment of good. These stories of the Devī specially bring out her real character. One can even say that the Devī ultimately symbolises the triumph of Good over Evil, or more correctly the appearance of the God-head in concrete form to destroy evil when worldly powers are unable to counteract it, or to use the words of the DM itself, to destroy the demons whenever they would oppress the gods (89.51).<sup>21</sup>

Besides, the DM in various places also refers to the role that the goddess plays in the cosmos. Of course, no special function is attributed to her in this connection. Still, however, her cosmic as well as benefactor functions can be inferred from the various 'Stutis' or panegyrics offered by the different gods like Brahmā and others. She is here mainly depicted as the creatrix of the universe and as the saviour of the world from evil (for references vide below). Her functions are as follows.:-

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21 See under Origins and Exploits of the Devī above.

She is the cause of the creation, preservation and dissolution of the universe (78.43, 53, 56, 57 etc.). Further, she also protects the three worlds (Trailokyatrānamahitā, 88.17) and desires their welfare (Jagattraya-hitaisinī, 82.36). It is she who causes infatuation or the error in the minds of all, but at the same time, when invoked, she also bestows knowledge, and when gratified she bestows prosperity (89.34), enjoyment, heaven and liberation (bhuktimuktipradayinī, 88.6; svargāpavargadā, 88.7; bhogasvargāpavargadā, 90.3; muktihetu 81.9). Further, she also bestows riches, fame, devoted children wife and servants. By her favour, one's relatives do not perish away, and one performs good deeds and thereby gains heaven. When remembered, she also bestows intelligence and removes poverty, pain and fear. She has ever benevolent thoughts for granting benefits to all (81.15-17). She accomplishes every petition (sarvārthasādhikā) and is also a giver of refuge (saranyā) (88.9). Elsewhere, she is said to be the supreme way for salvation of those who seek refuge, of the woe-begone and also of the afflicted (88.11 etc.). When propitious, she destroys all sickness

from men, but on the other hand, when wrathful, she destroys all their desires. It is said that no calamity befalls her devotees and those who seek her refuge become the very refuge (of others) by themselves (88.29).

(C) PHILOSOPHICO-MYTHOLOGICAL ASPECT:

Some interesting details on this point are found in the DM (78.33ff). It opens with an enquiry as to why even intelligent beings are found to be victimised by *Māyā*<sup>22</sup> or lack of correct understanding.<sup>23</sup> Though they are endowed with the discriminating power in all secular matters, they can not rise above their earthly attachments. However learned and wise a man may be, he is bound to be caught in the meshes of *māyā*.<sup>24</sup> It is impossible to extricate oneself

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22 Here '*Māyā*' does not mean illusion as will be clear from what follows.

23 Tat ~~kāma~~ *kāma* mahābhāga yaṁ moho jñānī<sup>ṁ</sup>orapi / mamāsyā ca bhavatyēṣa vivekāndhasya mūḍhatā // MKP 78.33.

24 Jñānīmāpī cetāṁsi devī bhagavatī hi sā / balād ākr̥ṣya mohāya mahāmāyā prayacchati // Ibid 78.42.  
Cf. Devī-Bhāgavata 5.33-52; Jñānīmāpī cetāṁsi paramā prakṛtiḥ kila / balād ākr̥ṣya mohāya prayacchati mahīpate //.



from this eternal bondage. Māyā has got a peculiar nature so as to plunge one and all into the ocean of awful ignorance. It should not, however, be supposed that Māyā or Vaiṣṇavi-sakti is only a bewildering phenomenon, or power that stupefies all. As one representing the incomprehensible power of the Supreme God, Māyā has a far loftier significance in the Purāṇas and Tantras. One should not lose sight of the fact that she is at once the cause of both bondage and salvation.<sup>25</sup> She is a divinity that creates the whole world, and if propitiated by selfless devotion, she is said to be so gracious as to make her devotee liberated from the bondage of saṃsāra.<sup>26</sup>

in the same chapter of the DM (78.45-46)

Next/a question is asked regarding the nature and functions of the Goddess called Mahāmāyā, and in response

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25 Sā vidyā paramā mukter hetubhūtā sanātani / saṃsāra-bandha hetuś ca saiva sarveśvareśvarī // MKP 78.44.  
Cf. Devī-Bhāgavata 5.33.53: Yayā vyāptam idam sarvaṃ bhagavatya carācaram / mohadā jñānadā saiva bandha-mokṣapradā sadā //

26 Tayā viśrjyate viśvaṃ jagad etac carācaram / saīṣā prasannā varadā nṛṇāṃ bhavati muktaye // MKP 78.43.

to the querry of the King (Suratha), the sage (Sumedhas) starts giving various accounts of her mysterious appearance on the earth (for details vide Origins and Exploits of the Devī). First of all, our attention is drawn to the fact that Sakti, considered as a Goddess, is eternal and all-pervading, and that the visible world is only a form of that Sakti.<sup>27</sup>

Though, she pervades the whole sphere of existence and is not at all liable either to creation or destruction, yet many stories relating to her birth are told in our ancient mythology. Inspite of her eternal character and imperishable form, Sakti in her grosser shape is often said to be born whenever she makes her appearance obviously to accomplish those things over which nobody has any control.<sup>28</sup> What deserves our special notice is the fact that the all-pervading character of Sakti has been fully recognised in the DM and expressed in ~~ambiguous~~ <sup>clear</sup> terms.<sup>29</sup> It is

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27 Nityaiva s̄a jaganmūrtis tayā sarvaṃ idaṃ tatam /  
tathāpi tat samutpattir bahudhā śruyatāṃ mama //  
MKP 78.47.

28 Devānām kāryasiddhyartham āvirbhavati s̄a yadā /  
utpanneti tadā loke s̄a nityāpyabhidhiyate // Ibid, 78.48.

29 Yac ca kiñcit kvacid vastu sadasā vākhilatāmike /  
tasya sarvasya yā śaktiḥ tvam kim stūyase mayā / Ibid,  
78.63.

further stated that no language is adequate enough to express the glory of one that caused the trinity of gods, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva to assume their corporeal form.<sup>30</sup> Śakti is depicted as the ultimate cause of the world and rightly described as ādyā-prakṛti (premordial substance).<sup>31</sup> The main current of Śakti-cult is summed<sup>up</sup> as follows:-  
 'Bhagavatya kṛtaṁ sarvaṁ na kiñcit avasiṣyate /'.<sup>32</sup> It shows unmistakably<sup>ka</sup> the stern fact that everything is being done by the sacred hand of the Goddess as Śakti or the eternal energy.

#### (III) THE CULT:

In the DM there are no special instructions regarding the details of Devī-worship. There are, however, references to her worship as performed by King Suratha and Vaiśya Samādhi and also to eulogies of Devī-worship and

30 Cf. Brahmā's invocation to Goddess:- Viṣṇu-sarīragraha-  
 nam aham īśāna eva ca / kṛitās te yatotās tvam kām  
 stotum śaktimān bhavet // MKP 78.65.

31 Hetuḥ samasta jagatāṁ triguṇāpi doṣair na jñāyase  
 hariharādibhirapyapārā / sarvāśrayākhilamidam jagad-  
 aṁsabhūtam avyakṛtā hi paramā prakṛtis tvamādyā //  
 MKP 81.7.

32 Cf. Sarvaṁ kṛtaṁ tvayā devī kāryaṁ naḥ khalu sāmpra-  
 tam / Devī-Bhāgavata, 5.20.

these are treated under Chap.II, Sec.I. It may be noted that the latter developed cult is not found here.

(IV) CONCLUSION:

The foregoing survey of the DM chapters shows **they contain** that ~~here is~~ a sort of philosophico-mythological attempt to explain the fundamental principle of error or illusion in which humanity falls and suffers. It is a sort of ignorance or *Māyā* which covers the true nature of man. This *Māyā* is conceived as a Goddess and when she is worshipped, one gets freedom from her.

Further the *Devī*-mythology is a development of the entire Hindu Mythological movement depending directly upon the Veda (cf. the striking similarity of the *Vāk-Sūkta*, RV.10-125 with the pantheistic nature of the *Devī* as described in the DM), then to some extent on Viṣṇuism and finally on the polytheistic nature of God-head which was **predominant feature of the Vedic mythology and was** ~~already amply present in Vedic times, and~~ further developed by the *Purāṇas*, and used so profusely in the DM.<sup>32a</sup> The whole creation of the *Devī*'s figure in the DM shows a great synthetic genius behind it and this grand figure has probably been utilised by the *śāktas* in so far.

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32a The *Devī* being born from the lustres of the different gods (vide I - Origins and Exploits of the *Devī*).

as it was suitable to them.

In the DM Śakti does not necessarily stand for Śakti as understood by the Tantra Literature. She is not merely the Mother-Goddess also. The Śakti of the Tantras is more connected with Śiva and also belongs to the context of the mysterious Yoga. Here in case of the Devī, on the other hand, there is just worship and prayer and she is connected with Viṣṇu, as the first manifestation of the Devī is Viṣṇu's Yoganidrā. Here the Devī personifies the eternal principle, the supreme creatrix of the world. She is the ultimate of the world in a female form viewed from the philosophical & mythological point of view. In this connection, as stated earlier, her figure can be compared with the R̥gvedic Vāk (RV.10.125) which pervades every thing and makes everything move. Moreover, she is to some extent also comparable with the Sāṃkhya principle of prakṛti from which the world is created. But the difference is that prakṛti has three guṇas viz. light, energy and ignorance, whereas the Devī, on the other hand, is primarily said to be the Māyā or the error into which the world falls. Moreover, she also contains the essence of all the different gods, which fact symbolises a spirit of unity among all the sects.

Thus, in the Devī-mythology, there is an attempt to present the divine principle in a female form, in the frame-work of the incarnation theory (~~Avatāra-vāda~~), and as such it belongs to a slightly later period in the development of Indian mythology & religion, i.e. the one<sup>coming</sup> after the full development of the trinity of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Siva,<sup>33</sup> and also when the theory of incarnation as first propounded in the BG (4.7) had been accepted as very important.

It may be also noted here that the figure of the Devī as presented in the DM appears to have little or no connection with any uncivilised or aboriginal culture. The only reference is to the offering of blood which might have been a remnant of human sacrifice known even to very early Veda times (cf. the story of Sunahsepa in the ABr. and the Puruṣamedha in the VS). Further, the Devī is

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of Devī

33 Cf. Different epithets/which are discussed earlier.

referred to as drinking some intoxicant (pāna) during her fight with Mahisāsura (80.34) which is an element probably from some popular source. Moreover, it admits of little doubt that many of the Devī's forms especially those connected with mountains viz. Himalaya (e.g. Simhavāhinī and Kausikī) and Vindhya (e.g. Vindhya-nivāsinī) were modelled on the popular deities. Here mention may also be made of the Devī's form as Śakambharī which is probably some popular vegetation deity stated as the future incarnation of the Devī (vide I - Origins and Exploits of the Devī discussed earlier). This suggests that the Devī's figure as presented by the DM has much to do with a popular cult or mythology.

## SECTION III

## SOLAR MYTHOLOGY

INTRODUCTION:

The Sun-god belongs to the Vedic pantheon. His adoration was a common practice with the Vedic Aryans. In the Brahmanas it is found that offerings were made to the Sun for the removal of sins.<sup>1</sup> However, there is no definite evidence <sup>in</sup> from the Vedic literature <sup>regarding</sup> ~~on~~ a special sect of the Sun-god. The prevalence of Sun-worship was known and practised in the Gupta age and references to temples of the god are found from the inscriptions of the Gupta period.<sup>2</sup> Varāhamihira informs that the installation and consecration of the images and temples of the Sun should be caused to be made by the Magas <sup>(who were the Persians)</sup> and it appears that in his days the Magas were the special priests of the Sun-god.<sup>3</sup>

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1 Bhandarkar R.G., Vaisnavism, Saivism and Minor Religious systems, pp. 151-152.

2 Banerji R.D., The Age of the Imperial Guptas, pp.125ff; Saletor R.N., Life in the Gupta Age, pp.509-514.

3 Bhandarkar R.G., Op.Cit., p.153.



Thus it may be noted here that Sun-worship had been a feature of the Rgvedic times but the Sun-cult as such was introduced into India as a foreign form of worship i.e. from Persia and the construction of the temples of the god was also due to foreign influence.<sup>4</sup> The BhP contains a legend which also implies the same.<sup>5</sup> There also existed a school for the exclusive worship of the Sun known as Sauras whose existence in South India in the times of Śaṅkarācārya<sup>6</sup> can be inferred from the information of Ānandagiri who brings him in contact with the followers of that sect.<sup>7</sup> This sect appears to have evolved a theology of its own, but the system does not contain even the remotest allusion to a temple of the Sun and seems to have no connection whatever with the cult of the Sun<sup>8</sup> as it prevailed in North India.

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4 Bhandarkar R.G., Op.Cit., p.155.

5 Bhandarkar R.G., Op.Cit., p.153.

6 About the eighth century A.D., the period generally assigned to him, vide Radhakrishnan S., Indian Philosophy, Vol.II, pp.

7 Bhandarkar R.G., Op.Cit., p.152.

8 Bhandarkar R.G., Op.Cit., p.155.

The MKP merely alludes to the Sun-worship and does not suggest any existence of the Sun-cult as such. In the MKP, however, much material is available on the mythology of the Sun. It is found that the material available in the Purāṇa could divide itself in the following three parts, viz.:-

(I) The Birth of Mārtanda, the Sun.

(II) Solar Family.

(III) A general description of the deity, especially his weapons, names and epithets, his identifications with the gods and abstractions, his functions etc. and finally the conclusion.

(I) THE BIRTH OF MĀRTANDA:

Mārtanda, the Sun is Kāsyapa's son by Aditi. The story of his birth is narrated in the MKP as follows:<sup>2</sup>

Brahmā's grandson Kāsyapa Mārīca married

Dakṣa's thirteen daughters, Aditi and others, who begot the gods, demons, mankind, animals, birds, trees etc. Once as the demons subdued the gods, Aditi, the mother of the gods, worshipped the Sun imploring his help. The Sun revealed himself to Aditi and asked her to choose a boon. She chose that he (i.e. the Sun) himself may be born as her son and destroy the demons. Thereupon she became pregnant. At that time she performed penance and observed fasts. Kāśyapa became angry at her fasting and reproached her saying why did she destroy the egg in her womb by observing fasts. Aditi replied him that the egg was not destroyed but it (i.e. the egg) was meant for the death of their adversaries. Then out of anger at the words of her husband, she cast away that egg which blazed brilliantly with its lustre. On seeing the shining egg, Kāśyapa fell prostrate and worshipped it respectfully. Being gratified at his worship, the Sun revealed himself from that foetal egg pervading the sky with his glory. Moreover, a voice from the air addressed Kāśyapa explaining the name Mārtanda: "Since thou oh Muni! hast spoken of

this egg as destroyed (māritam andam) he shall be called Mārtanda<sup>10</sup> and he shall destroy the demons." The gods became joyful on hearing that speech but the demons lost their vigour. Thereupon, Indra challenged the demons to the battle and the latter (i.e. the demons) encountered the gods. In that battle, Mārtanda destroyed the demons and restored the gods to their sovereign positions.

It may be noted here that the above story is much different from the <sup>references</sup> ~~account~~ that we get in the RV<sup>10a</sup> though Aditi, the mother of Mārtanda, is referred to here as invoking the help of the Sun who later on became her son and came to be called Mārtanda.

## (II) SOLAR FAMILY:

The account of Solar Family occurs twice

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10 In the RV (2.38.8; 10.72.8) the Sun is called Mārtanda. Sayana explains the name Mārtanda in RV 10.72.8 as follows:—"मृतायुः पितृणां जन्तुः" (vide 'A Second Selection of Hymns from the Rgveda', Edited by Peter Peterson, Second Edition, Revised and enlarged by Robert Zimmermann, 1922, BSS, No. LVIII, p.268).

10<sup>a</sup> cf. Particular RV 10.72.8, 9.

(chaps 74-75 and 103-105) in the MKP. It is given in brief as under.:-

The Sun married Samjñā, Tvaṣṭr's daughter. She gave birth to two sons viz. Vaivasvata, Yama and a daughter called Yamunā. Samjñā could not bear the excessive lustre of her husband and hence leaving Chāyā-Samjñā in her place, she departed for his father's home. Chāyā-Samjñā also begot two sons viz. Sāvarni and Sanaiscara and a daughter named Tapatī. Once Yama enraged at the indiscriminative of Chāyā, the substitute mother for his real mother Samjñā, raised his right leg to strike her in righteous indignation, whence he was cursed by her to the effect that his leg would ever be in sepsis etc. Being deeply afflicted at that curse, he (i.e. Yama) went to his father for remedy for which he showed his inability by saying that for all curses could be averted but not the curse of a mother.

Afterwards out of love for his son, the Sun said that insects taking some flesh from his foot would go forth to the earth, and thus he was saved. One thing to be noted here is Yama's sentiment that mostly Chāyā was

not his real mother as she cursed him; because even towards unworthy sons a mother is not wanting in good qualities. The Sun then perceived deception played upon by Samjñā. He then went to Tvaṣṭr's home to inquire <sup>about her.</sup> ~~for his wife.~~ Tvaṣṭr disclosed him the real matter and at his request parred off his lustre whereat the whole world was put to chaos and disorders as the Sun was whirled around. From the parred off lustre, Tvaṣṭr made the weapons of gods, e.g. he made Śiva's trident, Viṣṇu's discus, Vasus śankus, Agni's spear, Kubera's palanquin, Yama's rod and Kārtikeya's spear. He also made brilliant weapons of other gods, Yakṣas, Vidyādharas etc. Afterwards, the Sun, disguised as a horse went to his wife Samjñā who was practising penance under a mare's form. With the motive that her husband may be of gentle lustre. The Sun begot of her three sons viz. two Asvins, <sup>called</sup> Nāsatya and Dasra, and also Revantana. He then revealed to her his true form whereat she was filled with intense joy. She also then changed her form and the Sun brought her to his home. He then allotted different offices to his children. Thus Vaivasvata became the lord of the

seventh manvantara, Yama the lord of manes, Yamunā the river flowing from the recesses of mount Kalinda, two Āśvins the physicians of gods, Revanta the lord of Guhyakas, Sāvarni the lord of the eighth manvantara, Sanaiscara the planet and Tapatī the river.

(III) DESCRIPTION:

Mythologically, Sun is Kāśyapa's son by Aditi (as noted earlier). He is said to have originated in the beginning from the Vedas and he is called Āditya because he originated first (cf. ādityasamjñām agamat ādāveva yatōbhavat, 99.14<sup>cd</sup>).

He is identified with several gods like Brahmā, Viṣṇu (Hari), Śiva (Aja-samjñitah, Mahādeva), Indra, Kubera, the lord of wealth (vittesa), Yama, the lord of Manes (Pitrpati), Varuṇa, the lord of water (Ap-pati), Agni and Prajāpati (102.36; 106.69).

Moreover, he is also equated with gross elements like the wind, sky, water and earth. ~~This suggests that here the gross light is meant.~~ He is also identified with the mountain, ocean, trees and herbs (102.36; 106.69-70)

and also with the Time composed of nimeṣa, kāṣṭhā and other measures of time (75.13).

Besides, he is also identified with luminaries like the Moon, grahas and nakṣatras (102.36; 106.70).

He is also likened to the Vṛṣa or bull (104.4).<sup>11</sup>

His weapons are cakṛa, śaṅkha, śārṅga and Padma. Thus he is descrined as Cakṛin, Śaṅkhin, Śārṅgin and Padmin (75.4). He has a well-proportioned car which is drawn by seven parrot-hued swift and ever unwearied horses.<sup>12</sup> He mounts on that car and moves for the benefit of the world (104.8,10).

He is also descrined in the MKP in terms which are applicable to higher and lower Brahman. For example, he is described as unborn (Aja, 101.36), imperishable (Akṣara, 106.66), unchanging (Acyuta, 100.66), all-pervading (Vibhu, 100.21), unending (Ananta, 106.65), pure (Viśuddha),

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11 In the RV in one passage Sūrya is called a bull (5.47.3) and in another a mottled bull (10.189.1).

12 In the RV Sūrya is said to have a car which is drawn by seven horses (5.45.9) or mares called haritāḥ (1.50.8; 7.60.3) or by seven swift mares (4.13.3).



75.3), unthinkable (Acintya, 106.68), possessed of unthinkable power (Acintya-Sakti , 100.6 ), the highest (para, 75.4; paramā, 99.22); the highest soul (Paramā-tman, 75.4), eternal (Śāśvata, 99.21; 101.18). At times, like the Upaniṣadic Brahman, Sun shares contradictory attributes like 'mūrta' and 'amūrta', 'sthūla' and 'sukṣma' (75.3).<sup>13</sup> He is described as Brahman's forms both 'para' as well as 'apara' (75.12<sup>cd</sup>). He is called Parabrahma (98.27). He is the ultimate reality of great sages and the ponderable by the metaphysicians (75.5; 100.10 etc.). He is also described as the sole domain of knowledge (jñānaikadhāmaabhūta, 75.3).

He is said to be the highest soul (Parama Puruṣa) and Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva are mentioned as his manifestations in the act of creation, preservation and destruction respectively (99.112<sup>cd</sup>, 13; 19.21; 100.2; 101.35, 38; 106.71 etc.).

Further he has certain philosophic attributes, viz. Amātātman (75.3), Sadātman (101.29), Mahātman (75.30 etc.), Bhūtātman (104.4), Guṇātman (101.27), Ādya, Akhila-martyamūrti, Viśvāśraya, Viśvamūrti (100.5), Guhya (106.6).

Names and Epithets:

Like other important gods of Hindu pantheon, the Sun-god, too possesses various names and epithets. They are worth noting as they throw a good deal of light on his nature, form and functions. Some of his epithets are universal, i.e. are applied to all gods alike e.g. Ādideva (98.15 etc.), Bhagawān (74.33 etc.), Deva (101.24) etc.), Deva-deva (103.49), Devesa (103.54), Īsa (101.18), Sarve-svara (100.10), Surottama (106.5), Prabhu (102.6), Tridasavara (104.11), Jagannātha (75.11; 103.49), Jagatpati (103.56) and Jagatpratisthā (103.56).

Some of his names like Sūrya (74.28 etc.), Savitr (101.16); 106.64), Mitra (48.54), Aryaman (106.64), Pusan (106.64), Vivasvat (74.2 etc.), Āditya (99.14 etc.) are of Vedic antiquity. But in the Vedic mythology these names signify several Sun-gods and not a single god only.

He has certain epithets signifying his lustrous nature and also <sup>his</sup> functions <sup>like</sup> of giving light and destroying

darkness viz. Arka (74.3 etc.), Divākara (74.59 etc.), Bhāskara (74.41 etc.), Prabhākara (104.68), Bhānu (74.1 etc.), Bhāumat (75.25 etc.), Bhāsvat (75.35 etc.), Vibhāvasu (74.34 etc.), Sahasrāmsu (107.6), Sahasrarasmi (106.78), Tājasām rāsīṃ (75.15; 101.17 etc.), Sutejas (104.2), Amita-tejas (104.5), Timirāpaha (74.33 etc.), Nirdhūta-tamas (75.3), Tamahpatalapaṭavapātin (104.8) etc. As such he is called the 'eye' (lokasamastacakṣus, 104.5) and the 'lamp' of all the worlds (Akhilajagatpradīpabhūta, 104.11). He is described as the lustre of lustrous things (dhānavatām dhāman) and as the repository of lustre (dhāmnām ādhāra) (101.18). He even surpasses (other)gods, demons, yakṣas, plants and luminaries in point of lustre (106.12). Dwelling in the sky he makes everything around him brilliant and penetrates the earth and atmosphere with his rays (106.63). Further, he enlivens the three worlds with his heat (104.7).

#### Functions:

In the MKP Sun is mainly described as punctuating

time and seasons and giving light by destroying darkness with his rays.<sup>14</sup> Besides, the MKP in various places also refers to the cosmic and benefictory functions of the Sun. Thus, he is said to be the creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe. He is also described as the cause of all (Sarvakāranabhūta, 75.5; Sarvāhetu, 100.7).

Many a times he is also referred to as highly compassionate (101.34; 104.4, etc.) and is said to remove affliction of his devotees (102.7) and bring welfare to all (104.6).

#### CONCLUSION:

The mythology of the Sun in the MKP, appears to have three elements viz. (1) the Vedic (2) Upaniṣadic and (3) Purāṇic as such. That Mārtaṇḍa is the son of Aditi is a Vedic idea as is noted earlier. His description in MKP clearly shows that he is a form of Brahman as described in the Upan. Further in his description as the son of Aditi and Kāśyapa there is a purāṇic story; moreover the

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14 Vide his Names and Epithets discussed above.

name Āditya is explained as a<sub>1</sub>dau abhavat (99.14<sup>cd</sup>) which might have some popular basis. The figure of the Sun, <sup>thus</sup> therefore, as presented in the MKP serves as a good example of the <sup>general</sup> continuity of Indian thought from the Vedic times to the Purāṇas.

## SECTION IV

## DATTA MYTHOLOGY

INTRODUCTORY:

The MKP contains the accounts of Dattātreyā's parentage, his association with Arjuna Kārtavīrya, his teaching of Yogic practises to Alarka and some of his personal traits etc. His association with Arjuna Kārtavīrya and his personal traits have already been treated under Datta-worship (chap.III, sec.I). The remaining <sup>are</sup> data ~~is~~ treated in the following pages.

THE BIRTH OF DATTĀTREYA:

The MKP narrates the story of his birth in detail with the motive of his human form. This is in a dialogue-~~form~~ between Sumati alias Jada and his father, where the former narrates to the latter how Dattātreyā taught Yoga to Alarka when he (i.e. the father) asked about Dattātreyā, his parentage and about Alarka who happened to ask him about the Yoga. Jada narrated the story as follows:-

In the Pratiṣṭhāna City there lived a brahmin named Kauśika, who was led astray <sup>by</sup> of all vices. He was diseased with leprosy on account of his sins of his previous life. He had a chaste wife solely devoted to him. In spite of his harsh nature and rude behaviour, she, like a true Indian woman, esteemed him as a deity and as superior to all. Once he requested his wife to <sup>take</sup> lead him to a courtesan, whom he had seen living in a house on the high-way, as he was unable to forget her. Hearing the words of her husband, she, a faithful and an obedient wife, taking abundant money and bearing her husband on her shoulder, crippled as he was, started for the house of that courtesan <sup>on</sup> at one dark night. On the way, he, through the fear of the thieves in the darkness pushed away Māṇḍavya who was no thief but was afflicted with grievous pain, being impaled on a stake. Māṇḍavya cursed him to the effect that he would die at sunrise. Thereupon, his wife exclaimed distressed: "the Sun shall not rise". Thenceforward the Sun did not rise and the worldly activities were

consequently stopped. The gods in heaven could not obtain their sacrificial share as the sacrifices were not performed by the people. Thus the whole cycle of sacrifice, rain, grain and so on stopped, creating thereby a great chaos in the world. Prajāpati then asked the gods to propitiate Anasūyā, who was sage Atri's chaste wife. "Oh gods!" he said, "only the light can be a match for the light and the penance for the penance,<sup>1</sup> and you should worship Anasūyā, a great Satī, who will only be able to regain the position which is lost due to the curse of a Satī".

The gods propitiated her and she asked them to choose a boon. The gods chose that there be <sup>the</sup> day as before.

Anasūyā went to that Brahmin's chaste and devoted wife and told her mission of her coming there, explaining how for her sake alone, the entire universe was troubled. She agreed to consider the question favourably but was worried for her life without her husband. Anasūyā promised

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1 Tejah param tejasaiva tapasā ca tapas tathā / prasāmyate-  
marās tasmāc chrūṇudhavam vacanam mama // MKP 16.48.



her that she would see that her husband would be given a new life. She then enlivened the world by the light of the Sun and Anasūyā restored the life of Kauśika by her power of chastity.<sup>2</sup>

The gods in turn requested Anasūyā to choose a boon which she liked, and she chose that the three gods, viz. Brahṁā, Viṣṇu and Mahēśa should be born as her sons and that she may obtain Yoga along with her husband to be free from affliction. The gods granted her boon.

As the time went on, one day Atri saw Anasūyā who had just finished the four days of her monthly sickness, and there arose light from the eyes of Atri which became the seed for the three mind-born sons, who were Soma, Dattātreya

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2 Yathā bhartr̥samam nānyam apāśyam puruṣam kvacit /  
 rūpataḥ śīlato buddhya vāṅmadhuryādibhūṣanaiḥ //  
 Tena satyen viproyam vyādimuktaḥ punar yuvā /  
 prāptonujīvitam bhārya sahāyah śaradām satam //  
 Yathā bhartr̥samam nānyamaham paśyāmi daivatam /  
 tena satyenā viproyam punar jīvatvanāmayah //  
 Karmaṇā manasā vācā bhartr̥rārādhamam prati /  
 yathā mamodyamo nityam tathāyam jīvatāddviḥja //  
 MKP 16.82-85.

and Durvāsas. Soma was a partial incarnation of Brahmā, Dattātreyā of Viṣṇu and Durvāsas of Śiva who turned out only after seven days from the womb of his mother as there was a great trouble from the Haihayas. Thus the three deities took their birth and fulfilled the promise given to Anasūyā.

Afterwards Soma went to heaven and Durvāsas moved all over the world. Dattātreyā, wishing to be without attachment, dived down in a lake. Yet the young sages around him did not leave the bank of that lake even after hundred celestial years. On knowing this, Dattātreyā came out with a beautiful lady who had put on the best type of clothes. Even then the young sages were not set aback, thinking that the sage Dattātreyā was without any attachment. Dattātreyā, again, tried to test them and drank wine with her, but the youths were not disturbed, thinking that wind is always pure eventhough it blows over many impure places. Dattātreyā finally gave them their desired object, viz. the Knowledge of the Absolute.<sup>3</sup>

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3 MKP chaps. 16-17. For the stories in other Purāṇas and other works, vide Joshi H.S., Origin and Development of Dattātreyā Worship in India, pp. 101ff.

DATTATREYA AND ALARKA:

We have referred above to his connection with a group of young sages. In the same way he is frequently connected with Alarka as a teacher teaching him either Astāṅga Yoga or Ānvikṣiki and Sūtraka Vidyā.<sup>4</sup> The MKP narrates the story in detail (chaps. 18ff).<sup>5</sup> Alarka was the fourth and the last son of King Rtudhvaja and Madālasā, who was herself a great Yoginī and had the knowledge of self, which she transferred to all the three elder sons named Vikrānta, Subāhu and Satrumardana. Alarka was spared as King Rtudhvaja intervened and expressed his desire that somebody must be spared for the kingdom and for the sake of piṇḍa-dāna (offering of oblations after their death). Alarka thus got the worldly kingdom after the departure of his parents to the forest. Alarka ruled with success and peace for many years but was not satisfied with enjoyments. Hence his elder brother Subāhu thought out a plan to divert him from such a life. For wresting the kingdom from

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4 MKP 18ff; BP (180.32), BhP (1.3-11), GP (16.12) etc.

5 For details, vide Appendix I.

Alarka, he sought the help of the King of Kāśī who attacked the kingdom of Alarka and occupied it. Alarka's city was besieged and his life was made miserable. Disgusted at the defeat, the broken-hearted Alarka thought of his mother's instructional note which stated that one should avoid attachment (saṅga) and Kāma as far as possible, and if it is not possible, one should live in the company of saints since their company is a penance; and wish for mokṣa for that desire is a cure for the Kāma.<sup>6</sup> Thereupon he went to sage Dattātreyā and asked him to remove his affliction. In reply, Dattātreyā explained him wherein lay his suffering and launched into a metaphysical disquisition on the soul, the mind, the body, and pleasure and pain and also taught him Yoga (vide chap.III, Sec. III).

#### DESCRIPTION, FUNCTIONS ETC.:

Dattātreyā as an incarnation of Viṣṇu is already

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6 Saṅgaḥ sarvātmanā tyājyaḥ sa cet tyaktum na śakyate /  
 sa sadbhiḥ saha kartavyaḥ satam saṅgo hi beśajam //  
 Kāmaḥ sarvātmanā heyō hātum cec na chakyate na saḥ /  
 mumukṣam prati tat karyāḥ saiva tasyāpi beśajam //  
 MKP 34.23-24.

noted. The motive of his incarnation is stated to be the destruction of adharma and practice of its opposite viz. the dharma and preserving of the stability of the world.<sup>7</sup> Thus the Avatāra-doctrine as put forward in BG 4.7 seems to have been reflected in the story of Dattātreya.

The MKP states that whoever ponders on the highest form of Dattātreya, happy is he, and he may soon pass over the worldly existence (17.39<sup>cd</sup>-40<sup>ab</sup>). He is easy of reach by faith to the Vaiṣṇavas and if worshipped with the leaves (patra), flowers (puṣpa) and fruits (phala), he bestows final emancipation (17.40<sup>cd</sup>-41<sup>ab</sup>). He is always compassionate to his devotees (bhaktānāṃ nitya-vatsala, MKP 16.182<sup>b</sup>).

He has various named and epithets which are shared by Viṣṇu e.g. Hari (16.107), Kṛṣṇa, Hara (16.180), Nārāyaṇa, Vāsudeva, Janārdana (16.19), Śārngadhanvanā (17.38) etc. (16.182; 17.39), Cakrapāṇi (16.182), Śaṅkha-Cakragadābhṛt /

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7 Adharmasya Vināśāya dharmadhārārtham eva ca /  
anādinidhano devaḥ karoti sthitipālanam //  
MKP 17.42.

He is also called Anagha (16.148 etc.), Carācaraguru (17.38), Daityāntaka (16.180) and Jagannātha (16.150 etc.). Some of his epithets are generic or philosophic in nature e.g. Ananta (16.181; 17.38,39), Acyuta, Akṣaya, Ajara (16.181), Aprameya (17.39), Vibhu (16.109), Mahātman (16.109 etc.) etc. He has also a dishonourable attribute like Madyapa (16.144), but he is not a drunkard in the real sense of the term, for he resorts to wine only when he wants to test his devotees (For details vide Datta-worship, chap. III, sec. I).

In almost all the Purāṇas, except the Liṅga-Purāṇa and Kūrma-Purāṇa, Dattātreyā is referred to as a great saint and a Yogin.<sup>8</sup> In the MKP he<sup>is</sup> frequently called a Muni (16.112), Muni-śreṣṭha (16.153), Mahāmuni (16.180), Yogīśa (16.116), Yoga-vit, Yogīśvara (16.117), Sarvatra-samadarsin (16.133), Samadarsin (16.151) etc.

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8 Vide Joshi H.S., Origin and Development of Dattātreyā worship in India, p.101.

## SECTION IV

In this section mythological traits of Agni, Indra, Brahmā and Viṣṇu are discussed.

I - AGNI

Agni, the fire god, belongs to the Vedic pantheon. In the RV, he is the personification of the sacrificial fire, and "next to Indra he is the most prominent of the Vedic gods. He is celebrated in at least 200 hymns of the RV, and in several besides he is invoked conjointly with other deities."<sup>1</sup>

In the later mythology, Vedic conceptions of Agni are partly retained and occasionally revived. Thus he bestows all the gods the means of their subsistence,<sup>2</sup> and he is the mouth of the gods, and cheers up all the gods by consuming the oblations. He is the life-breath of the gods.<sup>3</sup> He is also the support of the sacrifices,<sup>4</sup> and drinks the soma at the sacrifices and consumes oblations.<sup>5</sup>

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1 Macdonell A.A., VM, p.88.

2 Namaḥ samasta devānāṃ vṛttidāya suvarcase / Ibid 96.28.

3 Tvam mukham sarvadevānāṃ tvayāttam bhagavān haviḥ / prīṇayasyakhilān devāns tvat prāṇāḥ sarvadevatā // MKP 96.29.

4 ...Yajñās tvadādhārā hutāsana / Ibid 96.33<sup>ab</sup>.

5 Hutāsanas tvamiti sadābhipūjyase, mahākratau niyamapa-rair maharṣibhiḥ / abhiṣtutaḥ pibasi ca somam adhvare, vaṣatkṛtānyapi ca havīṃṣi bhūtaye // Ibid, 96.95.

The Sun, the Moon, the gods and the demons are said to gratify him with the oblations and obtain their desired things.<sup>6</sup>

The common synonyms of Agni viz. Vahni (96.33 etc.), Jātavedas (96.25,44), Hutāsana (96.33 etc.), Havya-vāha (96.41,61; 97.1); Havya-vāhana (96.46,60), Havyāsana (96.70), Saptārciṣ (96.26), ~~or Saptārciṣ (96.60)~~, Kṛṣṇavarman<sup>t</sup> (96.59) etc. are all derived from the Vedic conceptions of Agni.

Agni resembles gold in lustre.<sup>7</sup> He is the cause of the creation of gold and as such the epithets like Hiranyaretas, Hiranyagarbha are applied to him (96.49-50).<sup>8</sup>

On the whole the later Agni is a personification of the element fire, and is, therefore, spoken of as having

6 Sūryendū sakalasurāsuras' ca havyaiḥ, santosyābhimata-phalānyathāpnuvanti // Ibid 96.67cdef.

7 Ibid  
MKP 96.50; cf. also RV 2.2.4; 7.3.6.

8 Hiranyaretas tvam vahne hiranyodbhava-kāraṇam // Hiranyagarbhas' ca bhavān hiranyasadrśaprabhah / Ibid 96.49cd - 50ab. Cf. Mbh 13.84.46 where Agni and Soma are reckoned as joint fathers of gold, "Agnisomātmakam idam suvarṇam".



wind for his charioteer (Anila-Sārathi). He is said to fatten and nourish the gods, Dānavas, Yakṣas, Daityas, Gāndharvas, Rākṣasas, men, cattle, trees, animals, birds and raptiles, and is also said to be the cause of their creation and destruction.<sup>9</sup> He is associated with the creation of the universe, both moveable and immovable (96.41<sup>cd</sup>, 44, 63). He nourishes the world and all the living beings (96. 47-48).

He creates and consumes the waters and renders them wholesome so as to make them the source of nourishment for the living beings.<sup>10</sup>

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9 Devatādānavāyaksādaityāgandharvarākṣasāh / mānuṣāh  
paśavo vrkṣāh mṛgapakṣisaṁsrpāh // Āpyāyante tvayā  
sarve saṁvārdhyānte ca pāvaka / tvatta evodbhavam  
yānti tvayyante ca tathā layam // MKP 96.34-35.

10 Apah srjasi deva tvam, tvam atsi punarevaṭāh /  
pacyamānās tvayā tās'ca prāninām puṣṭikāraṇam //  
MKP 96.36.

There seems to have been no definite idea about his figure except that he has seven tongues<sup>12</sup> viz. Kālī, Karālī, Manojavā, Sulohitā, Sudhūmravarnā, Sphulinginī and Viśvasrjā (96.52-58). These names are already given in the MU 1.2.4 where the seventh tongue is named as Viśvarūcī.

Fire is one, but his forms are many.<sup>13</sup> He is trividha, three-fold (in earth, air and sky<sup>14</sup>).

He is described as light among all living beings.<sup>15</sup> He is also described as dwelling under the form of glowing light, among the Siddhas with loveliness, among the Nāgas under the form of wind, among the mankind he is anger, among the birds and animals he is moha or illusion, among the trees he is stability; he is hardness with reference to the

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12 Cf. RV 3.6.2.

13 MKP 96.63.

14 Ibid 96.40.

15 Ibid 96.48.

earth, fluidity in water, swiftness in wind, and with his faculty of permeation, he abides in the sky.<sup>16</sup>

He is the sublime essential truth dwelling in the lotus-heart of every-being (96.63); he sprang before all the created beings (96.61).

He is identified with certain gods of whom viz. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva, the lord of the bhūtas, Indra, the lord of the gods, Aryman, Varuṇa, the lord of the waters (96.67<sup>ab</sup>), Āditya, the illuminating one (96. 48). He is also identified with certain abstractions e.g. the day, the night, and the two twilights (96.49<sup>ab</sup>), Kāla or Time and its various measures, e.g. muhūrta, kṣana, lava, kalā, kāṣṭhā and nimeṣa (96.50<sup>cd</sup> - 51).

He is also equated with the gross elements like the wind (96.47,70), the earth, with its mountains and

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16 Devesu tejorūpena kāntyā siddheṣvavasthitah / viṣa-  
rūpena nāgeṣu vāyurūpah patatrisu // Manujēṣu bhāvan  
krodho mohah pakṣimrgādisu / avāṣṭambhoṣi taruṣu  
kāthinyam tvam mahim prati // Jale dravas tvam bhagavan  
javarupi tathāhile / vyāpitvena tathaiivāgne nabhasi  
tvam vyavasthitah // Ibid, 96.37-39.

forests, and the sky which holds the Moon and the Sun (96.64). He is also called the submarine fire that is held within the bosom of the great ocean (96.64).

He has great many names and epithets, which fall into three classes, as they describe his appearance, functions and relations. Indeed all words for 'fire' may be used to designate Agni; the more common ones are Anala (96.17,18), Pāvaka (96.23 etc.), Kṛsānu (96.60), Pīṅākṣa, Yellow-eyed (96.45,50), Lohita-grīva, red-necked (96.59), Vibhāvasu (97.2,6), Śuci (96.70), Śukra (96.60), Śukra-rūpa, Suvarcas (96.28), Mahādyuti (96.44), Vaidyutābha, having lightening-like lustre (96.70), Vimala, Atidīpta (96.70) etc. Many of these epithets are shared with the Sun-god e.g. Vibhāvasu, Suvarcas, Śuci. These names and epithets also occur in the Epics.<sup>17</sup> The common epithets of the gods viz. Deva (96.36 etc.), Bhagavān (97.1,19), Jagatprabhu (96.57), are also applied to him. He has also certain generic or philosophical attributes in common with the other gods, e.g. Avyaya (96.61; 97.9), Akṣaya (96.62,64),

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<sup>17</sup> Hopkins E.W., EM, pp.97ff.

Acintyarūpa (96.62), Ananta (96.63), Ādya (96.46), Mahātman, and Sadātman (96.277).

## II - INDRA

Indra stands in the first rank among the gods in the Vedas.<sup>1</sup> In the period of the Brāhmaṇas, he became the chief of the heaven and even maintained this position in the period of the Purāṇas, though, of course, subordinate to the trinity of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva,<sup>2</sup> but as the chief of all the other gods.<sup>3</sup> Thus he is called by various epithets viz. Amarādhīpa (79.22), Devarāja (8.256, 259), Deveśa (8.263), Surādhirāja (1.28), Sureśa (5.14), Sureśvara (8.263; 118.3), Tribhuvaneśvara (8.269), Vibudhādhīpa (8.270). Some of his epithets are universal, viz. Bhagavān (1.38; 118.3), Deva (118.1), Prabhu (8.250). He is also called Śacīpati (1.29; 82.1), Śakra (1.27 etc.)

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1 Dowson John, A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology, p.124.

2 Macdonell A.A., Vedic Religion, ERE, Vol.12, p.64.

3 Dowson John, Op.Cit., p.125.

Satakratu (1.31 etc.), Vāsava (8.241; 16.135) and Vṛtāhan (1.30), Pākāśāsana (1.38; 5-4), and Purandara (79.1; 118.1).

In the MKP, there is a story relating that five Pāṇḍavas are Indra's incarnations and Draupadī an incarnation of Indra's wife. This story is introduced in the Purāṇa for justifying Draupadī's polyandrous marriage with five Pāṇḍavas. The story runs as under.:-

Once Indra killed Tvaṣṭr's son,<sup>4</sup> and due to brahma-hatyā, he lost his lustre which entered into Dharma. Tvaṣṭr, being enraged at the killing of his son, produced out of Agni a demon called Vṛtra. Indra, being afraid of that demon, sent seven sages for compromise with him, but later on killed him in complete disregard of the terms of compromise, and once again lost his lustre which entered into the wind. So also when Indra seduced Ahalyā, sage Gautama's wife, he lost his lustre which then entered into the Asvins. When the demons knew Indra to be devoid of

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4 Cf. TS 2.5.1.1 which narrates how Indra incurred the sin of brahma-hatyā by killing Viśvarūpa, Tvaṣṭr's son, and hence all beings ran him down as Brahmahan.

vigour, they took births on the earth to defeat him. At this the earth, being overburdened, went to the assembly of the gods on the Meru mountain and implored their help. The gods, then, incarnated themselves with the portions of Indra's lustre. Thus Dharma, the Wind and Indra were born as Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma and Arjuna respectively through Kunti (Pāṇḍu's wife), and the two Aśvins were born as the twins (viz. Nakula and Sahadeva) through Mādri (Pāṇḍu's another wife). Thus Indra himself was incarnated into five Pāṇḍavas and his wife was born out of Agni as Kṛṣṇā, King Drupada's daughter). Thus in fact Kṛṣṇā married but one person of whom five Pāṇḍavas were only the incarnations (MKP, Chap. 5).<sup>5</sup>

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5 For details vide Marriage, Chap.II, Sec.II.

### III - BRAHMĀ

#### INTRODUCTORY:

In the R̥gvedic pantheon, Prajāpati is a minor deity, but often in the AV and the white YV and regularly in the Brāhmaṇas, he is recognised as the chief and the father of the gods. In the Sūtras, he is identified with Brahmā, his successor in the post-vedic age.<sup>1</sup> When the post-Brāhmanical age of rationalism ushered in and the cult of sacrifice fell into comparative disuse, the worship of Prajāpati gradually declined. But the theists coined a new name for him and called him Brahmā, first of the later trinity.<sup>2</sup>

#### DESCRIPTION ETC.:

In the MKP, Brahmā is identified with the Brahman of the Ups. He is thus described as unborn (Aja), unchanging (Avyaya), the resort (of the universe, Āsraya), the highest abode (Parama Pada) (42.87), uncomparable (Anaupamyā, 42.28), imperishable (Akṣaya), undecaying (Ajara), immeasurable (Ameya), self-dependent (Nānyasaṃsraya), devoid of odour, form and taste (gandharūparasairhīna), devoid of sound and touch (śabdasparśavivarjita) (42.33), without beginning and end (anādyanta), not modern (asāmprata),

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1 Macdonell A.A., Op.Cit., pp.118.119; vide his article on the "Vedic Religion", ERE, Vol.12, p.606.

2 Majumdar R.C. and Pusalkar A.D., The Age of the Imperial Unity, p.464.



unknowable (Avijñeya) (42.33-34).

Brahmā lacks the hold of the nature-gods upon the popular imagination. He is vaguer and tends to pass back in to the universal world-power, the neuter Brahman. Yet the personifying power invests even It with figurative anthromorphism; "the world of Brahman" = Brahman (Sa yāti brahmalokam hi.... MKP 26.34). The Brahman is philosophical, Brahman is mythological, one out of whom goddess Sarasvatī is said to have sprung (Brahmayonī, 21.32).<sup>3</sup> Brahmā is the deity or genius of Brahma-saras, which, as Kālidāsa explains, is equivalent of avyakta sarovara of Buddhi (Brāhmaṃ saras karanamāptavaco buddherivā-vyaktamudāharanti / Raghuvamśa 13.60), or the Universal Mind or Collective Unconscious. Sarasvatī is Brahmā's power, substance, represented as his 'daughter'.<sup>3</sup>

Brahmā is Svayambhū (43.17 etc.) and as such is generally identified with Prajāpati or the Great Father of the World, Pitāmaha, and with the other personified abstractions like Dhātṛ, Vidhātṛ (Maker, Disposer), and Viśvakarman, the All-maker. He is Lokapitāmaha

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3 Agrawala V.S., A Cultural Commentary on the Sarasvatī-Stotra, Purāṇa, Vol. I, No. 2, February, 1960, Vasanta-Pañcamī Number, p. 139

(47.40 etc.), Pitāmaha (43.8 etc.).

He is at once the creator, the preserver and the destroyer, thus combining into him the three-fold function later appropriated by other gods (42.28). His Supreme position is acknowledged and he, the self-existent god, is said to have manifested himself as Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra while creating, preserving and destroying respectively the universe (43.13ff). As creator he created the world's (lokakṛt), and all that moves and does not move (carācarasya jagataḥ dhātā). "Maker and lord of the world" he is called by various terms, e.g. Jagadādi, Jagadyoni, Jagato gatiḥ, Jagatpati, Jagatpūrva, Jagatsūtikara, Lokatantrin, Hiranyagarbha. He is Ādi-Puruṣa, the "first-male" and so Aja, "unborn". Brahmā's own birth from the mundane egg or from the lotus (below) is also recognised in the cosmogonic accounts;<sup>4</sup> cf. his names and epithets like Bhūpadmakarṇikāsamstha, Kamalodbhava, Padmayoni and Pañkaja-janman (vide Appendix II). His birth out of the novel-lotus of Viṣṇu is also referred to. He

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4 Vide Chapter IV, Section I.

was saved by Viṣṇu from destruction at the hands of the demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha (chap.78).

He is called Dhīmat (42.29 etc.), Vedhas (2.65 etc.), Parameṣṭhi, the highest sacrifice (46.64) etc.

He shares certain names and epithets with other gods, e.g. Ādideva (4.40), Deva (44.1 etc.), Devadeva (43.20), Devādi (43.21), Bhagavān (44.1 etc.), Parameśvara (43.9), Prabhu (44.3 etc.), Jagatpati (43.9 etc.), Jagannātha ( 42.19 ). Among his generic or philosophical names mention may be made of Acintyātman(43.8), Aguna (42.13; 43.13), Anādimān (43.8), Asāmprata (43.34), Dhry<sup>u</sup>va (43.33), etc. (vide Appendix II for his names and epithets). Many of these names and epithets occur in the Epics.<sup>5</sup>

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5 Hopkins E.W., Op.Cit., pp. 189ff.

#### IV      VISNU

##### INTRODUCTORY:

Viṣṇu, though a deity of capital importance in the mythology of the Brāhmanas, occupies but a sub-ordinate position in the RV.<sup>1</sup> In the later Saṃhitās and Brāhmanas, he assumes importance and prominence.<sup>2</sup> In the Epic and Purāṇic mythology, he is one of the leading gods and appears as the Supreme Spirit. But the names of Nārāyaṇa and Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa apparently occur more frequently or are more prominent.<sup>3</sup> The name Nārāyaṇa occurs in the ŚBr but there he is not in any way connected with Viṣṇu,<sup>4</sup> and the conception of Nārāyaṇa as the Supreme Being had already been evolved in the later Brāhmanic period.<sup>5</sup> In the TĀr, however, the name Nārāyaṇa is

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1 Macdonell A.A., VM, p.37.

2 Keith A.B., The Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and Upaniṣads, HOS, Vol.31, p.110.

3 Bhandarkar R.G., Vaiṣṇavism, Saivism and Minor Religious Systems (BORI, Ed.1929), pp.47-49.

4 Raychaudhari H.C., Materials for the Study of the Early History of the Vaiṣṇava Sect, p.7.

5 Bhandarkar R.G., Op.Cit., p.45.

directly related to Viṣṇu.<sup>6</sup> By the time of Pāṇini the worship of Vāsudeva had become well-known<sup>7</sup> and it appears that Vāsudeva came to be identified with Nārāyaṇa sometimes afterwards, as in the Mbh. In the Mbh we get a definite evidence for the identification of Viṣṇu with Vāsudeva; still in many parts of the Mbh, the divinity of Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa is not generally acknowledged. In the Purāṇic times, however, the cult of Vāsudeva ceased to be militant and the three different streams of religious thought - one flowing from the Vedic Viṣṇu, the second from the Cosmic and philosophic god Nārāyaṇa and the third from the historical god Vāsudeva- mingled together so as to form the later Vaiṣṇavism.<sup>8</sup>

#### DESCRIPTION ETC.:

In the MKP 1.4, Viṣṇu is recognised as the chief

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6 Raychaudhari H. C., Op.Cit., p.9.

7 Ibid, p.13; Bhandarkar R.G., Op.Cit., p.4; cf. also Agrawala V. S., India as Known to Pāṇini, pp.359-360.

8 Bhandarkar R.G., Op.Cit., pp.47-49.

among gods. He is also called Suresa (4.36) or Suresvara (8.24), i.e. the ruler of the gods. He has certain universal epithets viz. Bhagavan (78.49) etc.), Prabhu (78.49), Jagatsvami (78.6), Jagatpati (78.41), Jagannatha (78.70), Isa (8.240). He has also certain qualifying and distinguishing epithets, viz. Vasudeva (1.4 etc.), Narayana (8.240), Janardana (1.4 etc.), Madhusudana (79.8), Kaitabhari (81.11), Hari (8.240 etc.), Krsna (8.241; 79.20), Kesava (78.73), Atulatejas (78.53). Many of the epithets occur in the epics.<sup>9</sup>

The usual weapons of Visnu are Sankha, Cakra and Gadā. He is described as Sankhacakragadābhrt (78.77) and as Cakrin (79.9). In the Epics, Visnu gets the same epithets.<sup>10</sup> He is described as 'pitāmbarah', having yellow garments (8.241). He is said to be Garudadhvaja (79.3) and Kamaleksanah (78.75).

He is also described in the MKP in terms which are applicable to higher and lower Brahma. He is described as the creator, preserver and destroyer of the

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<sup>9</sup> Hopkins E.W., *Epic Mythology*, pp.202ff.

<sup>10</sup> Hopkins E.W., *Ibid*, p.206.

universe (1.13; 4.39). He is without the beginning and end (anādinidhana, 8.241; Amṛta, 4.37) and yet the beginning of the universe (jagadādi, 4.38). Thus he is independent of time, space and cause. He is eternity without the beginning and end. In short plurality emerges from and sinks in him. This compares well with the Upaniṣadic Brahman.<sup>11</sup> He is atomic and even greater than the great (4.38<sup>ab</sup>). The KU (1.2.20) also describes the Highest in such terms. He is also said to dwell in the heart (Hṛtakotāraguhāsin, 8.240). He is also described as Acyuta (78.6), the universal (Puruṣa 4.36), or the highest soul (Paramātmān, 8.240), unborn (Aja, 4.38), eternal (Śāśvata, 4.36), unchanging (Avyaya, 4.36), all-pervading (Vibhu, 78.72), unknowable (Aprameya, 4.36), attributeless (Aguṇa, 4.37; Nirguṇa 1.13; 4.31), the most choice and venerable and the excellent (Varīṣṭha, Garīṣṭha, Varenya, 4.37).

DOCTRINE OF VYUHA AND  
THEORY OF INCARNATION:

In the beginning of the MKP, the Birds relate to Jaimini the doctrine of the Supreme Being called

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<sup>11</sup> Radhakrishnan S., Indian Philosophy, Vol.I, p.175.

Nārāyaṇa subsisting in four-forms (caturvyūhātman, 4.37). The name Nārāyaṇa is explained as "one whose abode (ayana) is waters (nārāḥ)"<sup>12</sup> Nārāyaṇa, both as saguṇa and nirguṇa, is said to exist in the following four forms (mūrti) (4.44) corresponding to the four well-known vyūhas of the Pañcarātras:-

(1) The first form is called Vāsudeva which is indescribable (anirdeśya), bright (śukla), covered with the garland of flames, ever-existent etc. He is the highest goal of the Yogins. He is both far and near. He transcends the guṇas or qualities and is devoid of egoism. His shape, colour etc. are not real but imaginary (4.45-47).

(2) The second form is called Śeṣa, which supports the world and possesses the quality of darkness (4.48).

(3) The third form is called Pradyumna, which is full of the quality of goodness (sattvodrikta), and

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<sup>12</sup> MKP 4.43 = MS 1.10 with 'munibhir tattvadarsibhiḥ' in place of 'āpo vai naraśūnavah' in b and 'ayanam tasya tāh pūrvam' in place of 'tā yad asyayanam pūrvam' in c. For the meaning of the term 'Nārāyaṇa', vide Bhandarkar R.G., Op.Cit., pp.42-43.



which preserves the world and establishes dharma (4.49).

(4) The fourth form (apparently Aniruddha), which lies on the serpent-bed, has the qualities of passion and creates beings (4.50).

It is further stated that the third form of Nārāyaṇa (viz. Pradyumna) incarnates himself whenever dharma declines and adharma rises up.<sup>13</sup> In this connection the Varāha (Boar), Nṛsiṃha (Man-lion), Vāmana (Dwarf) and Māthura (Kṛṣṇa) incarnations of the god are also referred to (4.51ff). Elsewhere Dattātreya is also mentioned as an incarnation of Viṣṇu (16.133). In the geographical chapters, Viṣṇu is said to reside under the forms of Aśvaśiras, Kūrma, Varāha and Matsya in the Bhadrāśva, Bhārata, Ketumāla and Uttara-Kuru varṣas respectively (51.31).

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<sup>13</sup> MKP 4.53 = BG 4.7 with 'jaimine' in place of 'Bhārata' at the end of b 'tadātmānam sṛjatyasau' in place of 'tadātmānam karomyaham' in d.

## SECTION VI

In this section the material of the MKP about eschatology, heaven and hells, pitṛs or manes, Yama, the god of dead, and doctrines of transmigration and Karma-vipāka is discussed.

1. ESCHATOLOGY

In MKP 40.2ff various signs indicative of approach of death are specified. They are already mentioned under the discussion on Yoga,<sup>1</sup> and hence they are not repeated here.

Further, the Purāṇa also sets out persons to whom death is happy and easy and not a source of misery and sorrow or otherwise.<sup>2</sup> Thus, it states that if a man gives water and food in gift, he feels satisfaction at the time of his death (10.51-52); but, on the other hand, if he does not give them (i.e. water and food) in gift, he

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1 Vide Signs of Approaching death (Ariṣṭas), Chap.III, Sec.III.

2 MKP 10.51ff ; cf. BP 214.34-39.

endures burning thirst and hunger at that time (10.56). Moreover, if a man gives gift of wealth,<sup>3</sup> he overcomes cold and if he bestows gift of sandal, he overcomes heat at the time of his death (10.57). Furthermore, he who speaks the truth, does not separate loving relatives, and is a theist dies happily (10.53). Similarly he who worships gods and brahmins, is unspiteful, and shame-fast and speaks sweetly to others meets a happy death (10.54). So also a man who does not give up righteousness through lust, anger or hatred, acts upto his words and is gentle<sup>in</sup>/disposition dies in happiness (10.55). Whereas he who is a false-witness, or a liar and who criticises the Vedas is said to die in delusion (10.59).

The Purāṇa asserts that after a man dies, the soul or spirit assumes an ethereal body similar in shape to the physical body for undergoing torments.<sup>4</sup> The underlying conception is that when the gross body is destroyed after death by cremation, burial or other

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3 Or 'fuel' as the Cal.ed. says (10. 56).

4 Cf. GP, Pretakhanda 10.79ff; BP 214.29-30, 51; AP 230.2-3; 371.9-10; PP 2.67.68.

methods an intermediate subtile body is built up  
before the departed soul assumes another body.<sup>5</sup>

The subtile body is gradually built up by the rites  
performed on death and on several days after death.  
This conception is traceable to the Vedic period and  
is implicit in some of the Rgvedic hymns (10.15.14;  
10.16.4-5).

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5 Kane P.V., Op.Cit., Vol.IV, p.266.

## 2. HEAVEN AND HELL

### IDEAS ABOUT HEAVEN:

The MKP does not contain glowing descriptions of heaven as are found in the Mbh, Purāṇas and other works.<sup>1</sup> It states that men of good deeds reach heaven by mounting in heavenly car and there they are attended upon by Gāndharvas and Apsaras who sing and dance respectively (10.94-95<sup>ab</sup>). But, on the other hand, it also expresses the view that the pleasures of heaven are not unmixed with the pain and worries. Heavenly pleasures come to an end after sometime or other, and hence even from the very time of ascension there men worry for their rebirth (11.26).

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1 For reference vide Kane P.V., Op.Cit., Vol.IV, pp.165f.

### DESCRIPTION OF VARIOUS HELLS:

In the MKP we have a description of hells like the Raurava, Mahāraurava etc. (chap.12) and also of the punishment meted out to perpetrators of various sins (chap.14). It is expressed that men go to specific hells for their specific sins on earth. The various hells are described as follows:-

#### RAURAVA HELL:

The false witness, an ungrateful man, one killing a brahmin, a cow or the father, the stealer of other's lands and wives, <sup>markings of the boundary</sup> ~~the remover~~ <sup>and of</sup> the <sup>L</sup> and the seducer of the teacher's wife and daughter are said to enter the Raurava hell. This hell is two thousand yojanas in size. There is a chasm, just knee-deep, and very difficult to pass over. There the charcoal is heaped up and made level with the ground. It burns vehemently with its glowing surface of kindled charcoal. Yama's servants cast the evil-doer in its midst. This evil-doer runs about there being burnt by the violent flame and at each

step his foot is wasted and consumed again and again, and day and night he continues on the move. When he has passed over a thousand yojanas he is released and then he enters another hell to purge away his sins (10.81-87).

MAHARAURAVA HELL:

Those, who tread the forbidden paths and eat prohibited things, ~~these~~ who prove false to their friends, ~~these~~ who break the faith of their masters, ~~these~~ who are addicted to other's wives and who abandon their own wives, ~~these~~ who destroy the paths, ponds and resting places, are burnt in this hell by Yama's servants.

This hell is twelve thousand yojanas in size. The earth there is made of copper. Beneath it is fire. Heated by the heat thereof the whole region shines with light equal to that of the rising Moon, intensely severe to sight, touch etc. There the evil-doer is deposited, bound hand and foot by Yama's servants. He moves rolling about in the midst, preyed upon by crows, herms, wolves,

owls, scorpions and mosquitoes and vultures, he is speedily dragged into the road. Full of fear he can get no repose. He is released therefrom after hundreds of years (12.4-12).

TAMAS HELL:

Those who have killed a cow or the brothers, and those who have destroyed waters, <sup>who have killed</sup> food and infants go to this hell. It is bitterly cold. It is as long as the Mahā-raurava hell. It is enveloped in darkness. There men afflicted with cold, running about in the dreadful darkness encounter one another and seek refuge clasping one another. Their teeth adhere together chattering with pain through the cold. There are also other plagues the strongest of which are hunger and thirst. A cutting wind, laden with particles of snow, pierces their bones. Pressed with hunger, they feed on the marrow and blood that trickle down therefrom. Constantly licking, they whirl about in mutual contact. In this hell great affliction is endured by men till their sons are completely consumed (12.13-17<sup>cd</sup>).



NIKRANTANA HELL:

In this hell potter's wheel revolve incessantly. Men are mounted thereon and are cut up by the string of fate, which is borne on the fingers of Yama's servants; from the sole of the foot to the head, and these men do not lose their life thereby and their portions severed in hundreds reunite. In this manner the sinners are cut asunder during thousands of years till their sins are consumed (12.17<sup>cd</sup> - 24<sup>ab</sup>).

APRATISTHA HELL:

He, who brings obstacles to brahmins, who are engaged in their duties, is brought in this hell bound by terrible bonds. There are wheels, jars and well-ropes which <sup>u</sup>cause pains to the sinners, for thousands of years, ~~in the same condition.~~ Others are bound to the jar and well-rope, <sup>like</sup> as the jar in the water. Men whirl around there continuously spitting out blood, with blood pouring from their faces, and with eyes streaming with tears. They are visited with pains that are beyond endurance by living creatures (12.24<sup>cd</sup> - 30<sup>ab</sup>).

ASIPATRAVANA HELL:

This hell has the ground covered with blazing fire for one thousand yojanas, where they<sup>sinner</sup> are grievously scorched by the very fierce vehement beams of the Sun. The living-beings that go to this hell are ever falling down there. In the midst thereof appear a charming forest with moist leaves, which are sword-blades. Myriads of powerful black dogs also bark there<sup>They are having</sup> with long muzzles<sup>are</sup> and large teeth and<sup>are</sup> as formidable as tigers. Then gazing at that forest before them with its cool shades, the living beings hasten thither, oppressed with raging thirst, their feet burnt by the fire lamebent on the ground. When they went<sup>the</sup> there, a wind blows hurling down the sword-leaves and so casts the swords down upon them. There-at they fall to the earth into a mass of blazing fire which has pervaded the entire surface of the ground, and is constantly licking in other directions. Thereupon the terrific dogs quickly rend limbs from the bodies of the wailing sinners (12.30<sup>cd</sup> - 40).

TAPTA-KUMBHA HELL:

In this hell, on all sides heated pitchers are surrounded with the flames of fire and are filled with oil, iron and powder which boil over onto the heaps of blazing fire. Into them the workers of iniquity are cast plead-long by Yama's servants. They are boiled, and foul the water with the marrow that oozes from their burning limbs. Terrible vultures pulling them out fracture the eye-bones of their bursting skulls, again they are dropped into the same pitchers by the impetuous birds, again they become united with the liquefied heads, limbs, ~~sinme~~ sinews, flesh, skin and bones by means of the oil in the seething vessel. Then being quickly and vigorously stirred up by Yama's servants with a spoon, the sinners are churned up in the whirling pool of copious oil (12.41-48).

### 13 - THE PITRS OR MANES

The word 'pitr' means 'father', but the word 'pitarah' is used in two senses, viz. (1) a man's three immediate deceased ancestors, (2) the early or ancient ancestors of the human race that were supposed to inhabit a separate world (loka) by themselves.<sup>1</sup>

In the MKP, Brahmā is supposed to have created in the beginning four classes. viz. gods, asuras, pitrs and human beings.<sup>2</sup>

#### TYPES OF PITRS:

The pitrs are divided into two classes viz. mūrta (corporeal) and amūrta (non-corporeal).<sup>3</sup> There is also another division of pitrs into four classes, viz.

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1 Vide ~~Paragita-Purāṇa, pp. 340f.~~  
Kane P.V., HDS, Vol.4,

2 MKP 45.4; cf. Brahmāṇḍa-Purāṇa, Prakriyā-Khaṇḍa, Chap.8, and Upodghāta-Kāṇḍa, 9.35: Ityete pitaro devā devās' ca pitarah punah anyonyapitaro hyete /

3 Amūrtānām ca mūrtānām pitṛnām dīptacetāsām / MKP 94.3<sup>ab</sup>; cf. VP 72.1; 73.60; Brahmāṇḍa-Purāṇa (Upodghāta-Kāṇḍa 9.53), PP 5.9.2-3; Viṣṇudharmottara 1.138.2-3.

(1) Agniṣvāttās (2) Barhiṣadas (3) Ājyapās and (4) Somapās (93.40-42). Elsewhere the Agniṣvātta pitṛs are referred to as 'Anagnis' and the Barhiṣadas as 'sāgnis' (49.32). The VP also states this.<sup>4</sup> The Agniṣvātta and Barhiṣada pitṛs are referred to as early as the RV 10.15.4 and 11 and in the ŚBr, which mentions three kinds of pitṛs viz. Somavantah, Barhiṣadah and Agniṣvāttah, these are defined as follows:- those that performed a soma sacrifice are pitarah somavantah; those that offered, cooked oblations (like caru and puroḍāṣa) and secured a world are pitarah barhiṣadah; those that did none of these (two actions) and whom fire consumes when burning them are pitarah agniṣvāttah; these are the only ones that are pitarah" (2.6.1-7). The TBr also has a somewhat similar passage (1.6.9-5) and Kāthaka Saṃhitā 9.6.17 also refers to these three kinds of pitṛs. Later writers introduced certain changes in the meanings of the words for the different classes of pitṛs, and also increased the number

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4 Agniṣvāttah smrtās te vai pitaro nāhitāgnayah /  
yajvānas teṣu ye hyāsan pitarah somapīthinah //  
VP 30.6-7.

of the classes of pitṛs<sup>5</sup>, e.g. in the MKP, thirty one pitṛganas are mentioned (93.48<sup>cd</sup>) and they are divided into five divisions viz. of four, five, six, seven and nine groups, which fall into two classes, as they describe their nature and functions. These five groups are given as follows.:-

(I) The group of Four Pitṛs:- (1) Sukhada  
(2) Dhanada (3) Dharmada and (4) Bhūtida (93.47<sup>cd</sup> - 48<sup>ab</sup>).

(II) The group of Five Pitṛs is enumerated as:-  
(1) Mahān (2) Mahātman (3) Mahita (4) Mahimāvat and  
(5) Mahābala (93.46<sup>cd</sup>).

(III) The group of Six Pitṛs include those  
called (1) Kalyāṇa (2) Kalyatām Kartā (3) Kalya (4) Kalya-  
tarāśṭaya (5) Kalyatā hetu and (6) Anagha (93.44<sup>cd</sup>-45<sup>ab</sup>).

(IV) The group of Seven Pitṛs is mentioned as:-  
(1) Vara (2) Varenya (3) Varada (4) Puṣṭida (5) Tuṣṭida  
(6) Visvapātr and (7) Dhātr.

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5 Vide Kane P.V., HDS, Vol.IV, p. 343f.

(V) The group of Nine Pitrs is referred to as:-

- (1) Viśva (2) Viśvabhuk (3) Ārādhyā (4) Dharma (5) Dhanya  
(6) Subhānana (7) Bhūtida (8) Bhūtikṛt and (9) Bhūti.

Elsewhere the pitrs of the gods, the great sages, the Siddhas, the Guhyakas, men, Vipras, the forest-hermits, the life-long celibates, the rājanyas, the vaiśyas, the sūdras,<sup>6</sup> the great demons, the Nāgas, and the Sarpas are referred to have been invoked by Prājāpati Rci, on being advised by Brahmā, for obtaining a wife. K.M.Kapadia remarks that "it can be asserted that in these passages pitrs do not mean the dead person of the family but the dead persons of various groups - they may be ethnic groups - which we find in the Brāhmanic and the Purānic literature. And invocation in this manner must imply that at some stage in the development of the ritual manes of the community as a whole were worshipped."<sup>7</sup>

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6 The pitrs of the sūdras are named as Sukālins, MKP 93.23cd; cf. MS 3.198.

7 Op.Cit., p.11.

NATURE OF PITRS:

The pitrs are said to be the most ancient of the gods (ādyāḥ surānām) and are regarded as worthy of worship by the latter (i.e. the gods, cf. amareṣa-pūjyāḥ) (93.39). They are said to abide in various places such as the world of gods (devaloka), the atmosphere (antarīkṣa) (93.27), the moon's rays, the Sun's orb and a white heavenly car (93.31). They are the presiding deities in the śrāddha ritual (93.13). They derive their satisfaction from the clarified butter offered as an oblation in Agni, or from the piṇḍas (rice-balls) offered to them in śrāddha and they are believed to feed on the same by dwelling in the bodies of Brahmins (93.32). They, being as luminous as the Kumuda flower and the moon (i.e. white colour) are regarded as worthy of worship from Brahmins; and they having the hue of the rising Sun (i.e. red colour), are said to be worthy of worship from Kṣatriyas. Further, they, as bestowers of gold (i.e. yellow colour), are considered to be worthy of worship from Vaisyas and also, as resembling the indigo plant (i.e. the dark colour), are declared to be



worthy of worship from Śūdras (93.36).<sup>8</sup> They are said to be the leaders of Indra and other gods, of Prajāpati Dakṣa and Kāśyapa Mārīca, of Saptarṣis and also of other (sages), of Manu and others, of Munis, of the Sun and the moon, of nakṣatras and grahas, of the wind, the fire and the sky, of the heaven and the earth and also of Devarṣis (94.4-7). The pitṛs are described as 'somasūryāgnimūrtayah', (i.e. having the bodies of the moon, Sun and fire) and also as 'jagatsvarūpiṇah' as well as 'Brahmasvarūpiṇah' (i.e. whose true nature is the world and Brahman).

They are believed to be beneficent in nature and also to be saviours of the world from evil forces. Thus they bestow desires on people, viz.: god-head, Indra's status or even more than this, and also sons, cattle, strength and houses (93.30). When meditated upon by the Yogins, they free them from affliction (93.28). They are powerful to bestow all desired objects and grant deliverance to those who have no engrossing interests (93.29). They also expel the Rākṣasas, Bhūtās and fierce Asuras and also what is unpropitious to people (93.39).

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<sup>8</sup> Vide Varṇa and Jāti, Chap.II, Sec.I.

#### 4. YAMA, THE GOD OF DEAD

Yama is the son of Vivasvata and Saṃjñā, Tvaṣṭr's daughter. Manu Vaivasvata is his brother and Yamunā is his sister. Etymologically his name means 'Twin' and this probably is the real meaning of his name, for his twin-sister Yamī<sup>1</sup> is also a Vedic personage. In the later mythology Yama is regarded as a restrainer and punisher of the wicked and his name is derived from the root  $\sqrt{\text{yam}}$ , to restrain or to punish,<sup>2</sup> but such an idea is quite out of place in the province of the Vedic thought.<sup>3</sup>

Yama is described as having fearful face with fiery red eyes, terrific eye-brows, long teeth and hands carrying rod (daṇḍa) and noose (pāsa) (10.78-80).

He is said to delight in righteousness (105.16<sup>ab</sup>)

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1 In the MKP also Yamunā is once called Yamī and she and Yama are called twins (Yamalaṃ) (103.4).

2 cf. MKP 74.3-4.

3 Vide Hopkins E.W., The Great Epic of India, p.

and is described as righteous-eyed (dharma-dr̥ṣṭi). He is impartial to friend and foe (76.29; 105.17<sup>cd</sup>-18<sup>ab</sup>). He is called Śraddhadeva (8-160), which epithet is also shared by his elder brother Manu Vaivasvata (103.4).

Yama's abode is in the 'antarikṣa' (8.65-66). It is referred to as Yamaloka (8.66), Yamasādāna (2.18), Dharmarājapura (10.70), Yamakṣaya (10.68) etc. His messengers are described as terrific, foul-smelling, carrying noose hammer and mace and hard-hearted (8.141; 10.60). They carry deceased sinners to the abode of Yama binding them with cruel fetters and striking them with their staff (10.65). The road to Yama's abode is described as dreadful. Men who make gift of umbrella, shoes, clothes and food are said to pass that road with ease. His city is described as awful and terrible.

## 5. DOCTRINES OF TRANSMIGRATION AND KARMAVIPĀKA

The doctrines of transmigration and Karmavipāka are very important in Indian Philosophy and the belief in them is noticeable even in modern times. In the Purāṇas it is found that these doctrines are taken for granted.

The MKP contains expressions suggesting the belief in the past and future lives, e.g. *anya-janmani* (used in the sense of future birth in MKP 8.225) and in the sense of past birth in MKP 68.36), *janmani janmani* (32.48 etc.) and many other phrases of a similar import.

The term Karmavipāka occurs frequently in the MKP (14.4 etc.). It means "ripening of works, retribution for works done in a former life."<sup>1</sup>

The concepts of transmigration and of Karmavipāka are inextricably mixed up in Indian thought from at least the ancient times of the Upaniṣads.<sup>2</sup> The general rule is that Karma, whether good or evil, cannot be got rid of, except by enjoying or undergoing its consequences. The MKP says that whatever human action it may be, whether good or evil, it cannot be got rid of except by enjoying its consequences; a man gets rid of good and evil deeds by enjoying their

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1 Macdonell A.A., A Practical Sanskrit Dictionary, p.64.

2 Kane P.V., HDS, Vol. IV, p.39.

consequences.<sup>3</sup> The GDS also says the same thing.<sup>4</sup>  
 This doctrine is based on the SBr (2.2.27); BrU 4.4 and  
 6.2; ChU 3.14 and 5.3-10; KU 5.6-7 etc.<sup>5</sup>

But this general principle was modified in various ways by the Smrtis and later writings. They had evolved the doctrine that if a sinner did not undergo *prāyaścitta*, he had to suffer torments in hell, thereafter he became born as some insect or lower animal or a tree on account of some remnants of his sins and that he was born as a human being afflicted with certain diseases or with defects.<sup>6</sup> These last two consequences are described under the title *Karma-vipāka* (the fruition of evil deeds). The MKP asserts that the effects of Karma ~~are~~ lead the man first to the abodes of enjoyment or punishment, heaven

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3 Na tu bhogād r̥te puṇyam pāpam vā karma mānavam / parī-  
 tyajati bhogāc ca puṇyapuṇye n̄bodha me // MKP 14.17.  
 Cf. Tasmāt kṛtasya pāpasya prāyaścittam samācaret /  
 nābhuktasyānyathā nāśaḥ kalpakotiśatairapi // BhP 1.19.27.

4 Na hi karma kṣīyate / GDS 19.5 quoted by Śaṅkarācārya  
 in his bhāṣya on Vedānta-sūtra 4.1.13.

5 Vide also ADS 2.1.2.2-7; ViDS 20.47; for details vide  
 Kane P.V., Op.Cit., Vol.IV, pp.39f.

6 Vide Kane P.V., Op.Cit., Vol.IV, p.172.

or hells, and subsequently to rebirth in specified forms.

Thus

Further, when the sinners have passed through the various hells, then they are born again in this world because of their evil actions in different forms such as those of lower animals, insects, trees, decrepit or deceased human beings, i.e. first among lower castes, then among the four varnas in the ascending order or sometimes in the descending order and then also as gods (10.88ff). The righteous-doers on the other hand, when descending from heaven, are born in the family of Kings and other high-souled men, and there observing upright conduct, they experience vigorous pleasures and afterwards they either go upwards or they take a downward path and are born as men as before (10.95-97).

The MKP devotes a whole chapter to the topic of Karma-vipāka (chap.15). Therein it states into what animals and vegetables sinners are born after undergoing hell torments, and also from diseases and deformities sinners suffer after they are born as men. The belief that diseases were the consequences of sins reaches back

to the times of AV (8.7-3). A few verses of the MKP are mentioned here by way of sample:- The dvija, who accepts gifts from an outcaste (patita), is born as an ass, and who sacrifices for him (i.e. for an outcaste) is born as a worm after his release from hell (15.1). One, who takes away land, cow, gold etc., <sup>goes</sup> after ~~going~~ <sup>and then</sup> to Raurava and other terrible hells, <sub>L</sub> becomes grass, a bush, a creeper, a climbing shrub, a reed and a tree in order and afterwards when one's sins have been diminished to insignificance, ~~one~~ becomes a worm, an insect, a grasshopper, a bird, an aquatic animal, a deer, <sup>then</sup> and <sub>L</sub> having attained the condition of kine, and despicable castes such as cāṇḍāla, <sup>and</sup> <sub>L</sub> pukkaṣa, one becomes lame, blind, deaf, leprous and afflicted with pulmonary consumption; one is seized with diseases affecting the mouth, the eyes and the arms and also becomes epileptic, one attains also to the condition of a sudra (15.32-36).

Dr. P. V. Kane observes that the teachings of the works on Karma-vipāka, though dismal and terrying,

comes to this that no soul need be without hope provided it is prepared to wait and undergo torments for its misdeeds, that it need not be appalled by the numerous existences foreshadowed in those works and that the soul may in its long passage and evolution be ultimately able to discover its true greatness and realise external peace and perfection.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Op.Cit., Vol.IV, p.177.